

Chapter – I

My Native Village & Early Childhood

*My village, so beautiful and sweet,
Bordering the shores of a stream.
Where I left prints of my tender feet,
How I long O' Marukh for that sweet dream.*

The pleasant sights of the peasants wending their way home whilst crooning sweet songs in a mellifluous tone; herdsman driving their cattle at the fall of the evening after the day's toil and hard labour whilst humming 'Pattas' (folk melodies). These are some of the cherished memories of my early childhood. 'Patta' is a very popular genre of *Pashto* poetry. It is like a couplet of a *ghazal* (lyric) consisting of two lines, reflecting love and passion, separation from and union with one's beloved, and the songs of the lover and the beloved. My native village is situated amidst lush green and verdant fields. A few furlongs away from the village the swift and roaring waves of the stream 'Kabul' could be seen flowing towards *Atak* to merge in the river Indus.

It was a regular practice of mine to watch the charming sight of the setting sun whilst standing on the shore of the river. Sometimes during moonlit nights I felt a spontaneous urge to hum some song whilst watching the moon dancing on the waves of the river. At such occasions I was transported into a state of spiritual trance.

These memories are still afresh in my mind. Whenever I am in a pensive mood I relive those fond memories and savour them with relish as I used to do in my childhood.

I was born in the village which is known as '*Muhibb Banda*'. Though I had to stay out of the village for a long period to complete my studies, I never missed the chance to visit it during my summer vacations, to enjoy its sweet, serene and unpolluted atmosphere filled with the aroma of fragrant country breeze.

My village is neither too small nor too big. Its population is just a few hundred. Now the village has developed and population increased. Different tribes of *Pathans* are settled in the village and they all live in harmony. I belong to the Israelite tribe of *Jamiryani*. This tribe is one of those ten tribes which were taken in captivity and later banished from Palestine by Nebuchadnezzar. Afterwards the people of this tribe settled in the Frontier Province, Kashmir and Afghanistan.

Jamiryani tribe is one of those twelve Israelite tribes mentioned by the Promised Messiah^{a.s} in his book '*Masih Hindustan Mein*' (Jesus in India).

'*Hujra*' is such an institution of the *Pathans* without which no village or community dwelling is complete. Mostly young people spend their hours of leisure in a '*Hujra*', sometime they even spend nights here. The elders of the village frequent the *Hujra* in the afternoon till late in the evening. Their presence would invariably enhance the liveliness of the *Hujra*.

A *Hujra* generally consists of one or more rooms with a *choupal* (a pavilion) attached to it. During winter, rooms are used and in summers the pavilion is abuzz with

activity. A '*Choupal*' is open from all four sides and its roof is covered with reeds.

When the elder folk of the village retire to their homes, the *Hujra* is fully occupied by the young people. There begins several rounds of puffing of '*Chilam*'. Then the beating of a pitcher used as a drum, and the playing of a '*sitar*' and '*rubaabs*' (stringed country instruments) fills atmosphere with music. '*Patte*' and '*Badle*' are sung. *Patta* is like a couplet whereas *Badle* is like a 'ballad' telling a romantic or heroic story composed in verse and sung melodiously with music being played on. During my childhood the love story of Adam Khan Darkhane and adventures of the notorious dacoit Chamne Khan were sung at in verse. These gatherings continued till late night.

Although "*Hujra*" is usually the exclusive property of a single individual, it is open to one and all. All the people of the village are permitted to use this place. A *Hujra* is both a guest house and a youth club at the same time. Even the elderly people of the village hold their causal meetings here. It is the duty of the owner of the *Hujra* to serve drinking water and tobacco to the people present there. The owner also plays host to any guest that happens to visit the *Hujra*.

In our village there were two or three large *Hujras*; one of them was owned by my father. It consisted of three large rooms made of half baked bricks. It was spread over half an acre of land with a '*Chaupaal*' (village pavilion or rural hub) in it where about 15 beds were always remained spread out. An almirah in one of the rooms of *Hujra* was used as a library for my father. The walls were hung with photos of Hadrat Masih Maud a.s and portraits of Hadrat Guru Nanak Ji and Jesus Christ. The other two large rooms were used by the general public.

The land between our *Hujra* and the river Kabul was vast and uninhabited to our advantage as pleasant and cool breeze from the riverside reached our *Hujra* at noon or in the evening to the delight of those who took shelter in the *Chaupaal* from the scorching heat of the sun.

Our house was situated at a short distance from the *Hujra*. On Sundays Ahmadi brothers from *Peshawar* and *Naushera* would visit our village and stay in the *Hujra*. Such occasions provided great festivity as the *Hujra* would become a centre of devotional gathering where spiritual matters were discussed.

Some people who were fond of games enjoyed shooting water fowls in the river using a boat which was especially kept by my father for this purpose.

Meals for the guests were prepared at our house. To carry food to the *Hujra* from our house was considered a praise-worthy job. My mother herself was an excellent cook and her '*Pulao*' and '*Parathe*' were greatly favored by those who relished them. Sometimes the guests from *Peshawar* requested my mother to prepare '*Parathas*' for them.

When I recall those days I become nostalgic. Those were lovely days when the members of *Jamat* shared a bond of real brotherhood between themselves. They met, greeted and conversed with one another like real brothers.

If one was an Ahmadi there was no need for him to give personal details for his introduction. Being an Ahmadi was sufficient for one's introduction.

The picture is still vivid in my mind when young men of my village dressed in their finest of attire would throng the *Hujra* in response to the call for recruitment in the Army during the days of the World War II.

Once the recruitment was being done in a *Hujra* close to ours. The enthusiastic young men were waiting for the Major who was to arrive from Peshawar. The Major was given a hearty welcome on his arrival and he was seated on a high chair. After a while the recruitment started. Every young man wished to be recruited into the army. During the lunch break the Major said that he had been told that an Ahmadi family lived in this village and expressed his wish to meet those people. The owner of the *Hujra* sent for us. As my father was not in the village, I came to meet the Major. He took me aside and told me that his name was Doctor Shahnawaz and he was also an Ahmadi. I replied that by the grace of Allah I was also an Ahmadi. He gave me a warm hug and asked me to take him to my house to meet my mother as I had told him that my father was not in the village. I took him home. He greeted my mother with *Asslamo Alaikum* from behind the door and said, "Sister I am your brother in faith. I have come here to recruit the youth of this village in the army. Please tell me if you want to recommend anybody for recruitment." My mother replied she didn't have anybody to recommend for. She told him that since he was her brother in faith he should visit the home for the evening tea. When the recruitment was over, Major Sahib came to our house in the evening. My mother had prepared tea and a fair amount of snacks for the occasion.

Those were the days when an Ahmadi met another Ahmadi, he would exult himself as if he had chanced upon a rare ruby. I pray to God that bonds of love and affection among Ahmadi brethren may never get weakened.

Another notable feature of our *Hujra* was that whenever my father was in the village he would visit the *Hujra* daily in the afternoon and tea would be served. My

father was a very enthusiastic preacher of the Islam & Ahmadiyyat. He would divert any type of discussion towards the subject of Ahmadiyyat and with great zest and zeal he would discharge his duties as a *Dai Illalah*. Our *Hujra* thus turned in to a centre of *Tabligh*. I was very fond of attending the soul inspiring, informative and very interesting assemblies organized by my father and whenever my father asked me to fetch tea from home during such gathering it was with great reluctance that I agreed to go home as I didn't want to miss a single moment of the proceedings going there. I felt I was being deprived of an invaluable treasure of knowledge.

I would remonstrate with my mother about being sent home against my will to bring tea for the participants of *Tabligh* discussion going on in the *Hujra*. I would tell her that I could not bear being away from that gathering even for a short while. My mother would console me by saying that hospitality is an important teaching of Islam and distinctive feature of *Pathan* culture and would say that I should feel elated at being given the opportunity to serve guests.

I would here cite an instance how my late father would turn any discussion towards the topic of Ahmadiyyat. Once when an informal chat was going on, some landlord of the village addressed my father as *Khan Sahib* and said that drought was playing havoc with crops. He requested my father to pray to God for sending rain. My father said it did not matter if there were no rains as there were wells and canals. At this the landlord was surprised and told my father that during drought even canals and wells become dry or the water level goes down to the lowest. Here was the opportunity for my father. He immediately told the landlord that if he believed that the

water level goes down during a drought, why did he have reservations about accepting the fact that in the absence of divine revelations there was sure to be a dearth of such persons as would attain the status of a *Sufi* or a *Wali*. If *Imam Mahdi* had not appeared in the world, it would have turned into a dreary desert of dry spirituality and become devoid of holy personages but God was kind enough to put end to the spiritual drought by sending *Imam Mehdi* at the opportune time. Therefore believe in him if you want to change your spiritual condition towards the better. Only then you could inherit Allah's blessings and bounties.

Hujras were a suitable place for holding ceremonies in the village. People would throng the *Hujras* at the time of any festivity in the village. Be it a ceremony of somebody's marriage or the birth of a child or circumcision of a child. With the advent of radio and television the situation has now completely changed. But during the period of my childhood singers from Peshawar would be invited who would sing the whole night. People from adjoining villages would also turn up on such occasions. The *Hujra* would be packed to its capacity. Tobacco was served. During summer '*sharbat*' was prepared in earthen pots. People slaked their thirst with it. The festivities continued throughout the night. Neither my father would attend such gatherings nor would he allow us to go there. But on some occasions I would go there unintentionally. One could witness shameful display of profligacy at such gatherings. Poor people who could hardly make their both ends meet would fritter away their hard earned money to please the dancing damsels. God forbid, what a wasteful sport it was!

Persons with some religious bent of mind would invite a *Maulvi* instead of a dancing girl from *Peshawar* to

conduct a '*Mehfil-e-Milad*' (a gathering where people sing praises of the Holy Prophet).

I attended a number of such gatherings. The *Maulvies* who conducted *Mehfil-e-Milad* were powerful orators but they would conduct baseless and unreal stories in praise of the Holy Prophet to inspire zeal and excitement in the audience. They would narrate tales of *Yousaf-Zulekha* and *Ameer Hamza*. Obviously there was more fiction than fact in such tales. Similarly they would have the audience awe-struck while narrating fictitious tales of painful punishment meted out in hell to those who refused to pay *Zakat* during their worldly life.

The offering of *Zakat* was emphasized because the *Maulvi* himself was to receive the *Zakat*. They would instill fear in the hearts of people by weaving such tales so that people might part with some money as *Zakat* which the *Maulvi* would readily pocket. This treacherous trick did work more often than not.

Mehfil-e-Milad was usually conducted in the village mosque but sometimes it was also held in the *Hujra*. In short the *Hujra* assumed the importance of an institution in those days.

One could not visualize a *Pakhtun* village without the existence of a *Hujra*.

My father usually offered his five daily prayers in the village mosque. He often took me with him to join in the congregational prayers. The wave of hatred and fanaticism against Ahmadiyyat prevalent today in Pakistan was unknown in those days. There was no trace of the present vicious atmosphere created by *Mulla*. People were friendly, tolerant and gentle. The Mosque of our area was open equally for both the Ahmadis and non-Ahmadis. There was no prohibition for anyone. The *Imam* of the

mosque frankly held discussions with us about Ahmadiyyat. Although there was difference of opinion, but that was confined to discussions only. There used be no heated argument to offend each other and both the Ahmadies and non Ahmadies lived in harmony.

During the year 1953 in the province of Punjab the life and property of *Ahmadies* was imperiled due to the anti *Ahmadiyya* wave created by the fanatic *Mullahs* and inevitably the Frontier Province did not remain unaffected by it. Ours was the only *Ahmadi* family in the village. All our relatives were non-*Ahmadis*. One day a *Mullah* from Peshawar visited our village and launched a vilification tirade against Ahmadiyyat. At last he betrayed his intentions by inviting the people to eliminate the single *Ahmadi* residing in the village. He ensured them that by doing so they would reserve a berth for themselves in heaven. When the *Mullah* instigated the people to kill our family, suddenly some people who had fire arms with them stood up and ordered the *Mullah* to leave the village at once or he would be killed.

Mullahs, as you know, are moral cowards, and he was no exception. So when he saw people rising up against him, he thought it better to take to his heels. Thereafter people who frightened the *Mullah* out of the village came to our house and assured my father that they would give every protection to our family and we should have no cause to worry about, as nobody could dare harm us in any way. As a result of such strong assurance from the fellow villagers my father did not leave the village during the anti *Ahmadiyya* riots neither in 1953 nor in 1974. The people of our villages stood by their promise to protect our family even then. That does not mean that there was no opposition to *Ahmadiyyat* in the village. Indeed there was

opposition and in some quarters it was most bitter, but it never assumed the form of violence. Discussion and debates between *Ahmadies* and non *Ahmadies* were held, and parties forwarded arguments in their support. References from the books were given. But all this was done in a congenial and friendly atmosphere.

The lands of our villages are very fertile and blessed with the availability of ample water for irrigation from the canals; people cultivated all kinds of crops. My father used to grow wheat & maize besides *Barsem* (green food for cattle) and red chilli. *Barsem* & red chilli are profitable crops for landlords, as they are sold at a very high price throughout Pakistan. During my childhood days my father had established a firm by the name “Danishmand & Sons” which traded in *Barsem*. The seeds of *Barsem* were dispatched not only to Sindh, Punjab & other states but also exported to Egypt. My father was famous as a *Barsem* trader in the area. This business worked on successfully till the formation of Pakistan. Thereafter my father could not concentrate on this trade and gradually in the last years of his life he totally discarded it.

In 1948 for the first time electricity reached our village and ours was the first house to get it.

This became possible due to the efforts of my maternal uncle Abdul Salam Khan who was employed in the electricity department in the Frontier Province. When the decision to electrify our village was taken he started with our house. In the beginning for two months it was only our house in the village to enjoy this facility. Then gradually the whole village was electrified. With the coming of electricity the condition of the village began to

change. Harmful insects in houses were eliminated. Fans provided comfort during the scorching heat of summer.

When our house was electrified, I brought a radio set. I put it in the courtyard of house and turned it on. Women from the adjoining house gathered in our house daily after *Asar* prayer till *Maghrib* to listen to Radio Pakistan and Pashto programs from Peshawar. After *Maghrib* prayer I used to take out the radio set in the open or to the Hujra at the request of my friends that they might also enjoy listening to their favorite programs.

With the coming of radio in the village the assemblies and gatherings in the *Hujras* gradually became dampened. Now one can rarely witness young men playing on Sitar, *Tabla* or earthen pots in a *Hujra* in order to regale the audience present there. Radio & Television have brought about a sea change in the villages. Now the village folk of today are not as simple and gullible as they used to be during my childhood days.

Before the partition of the subcontinent and during World War II, a military truck came to our village. It was sent by the military recruitment department. Throughout the day it was announced in the village that a motion-picture would be shown at night. Nobody in the village had seen images moving on celluloid before. Therefore, obviously, there was great excitement among the villagers to watch a movie. Towards evening, people gathered in a spacious ground where the film screen was installed at a great height where everybody could easily watch the movie. Even the women sitting atop the roofs could enjoy the movie. The film started. It was the story about a family which became financially affluent, soon after its young members enrolled themselves in the army.

Such films were shown to encourage the young boys and to persuade the parents to get their sons recruited in the army. This was the first time that I watched a film.

Such films did have a great impact on the village folk. Most of the illiterate youth aspiring to join the army would go to Peshawar. As soon as they joined the army they were sent to the front. It so happened many times that a youth would go to his fields with his bullocks and plough, and when someone from his home would bring lunch for him, he was not to be found in the fields. A few days later news would reach the village that the young man had gone to Peshawar to join the army. Such a conduct of young men prompted some poet to compose poems on this topic. I still remember one such couplet:

*It does not matter to us whether you return or not
But the money order must inevitably reach us.*

World War II had changed the poor life style of the village folk. Young men who joined the army would send money to their home. In this way poor people heaved a sigh of relief from their erstwhile hard living.

Gradually the mud houses gave way to *pucca* ones. People brought radio sets and thus the situation in the village changed to a great extent.

In the year 1960, the people of the village decided that the primary school in the village should be upgraded to middle school. People had to send their wards to a town which was 3 miles away from the village to study beyond primary level. The Government agreed to set up a middle school provided the villagers offer land free of cost for this purpose.

Now the question was who in the village would show such generosity. The *Pathans* love their lands dearly and they would not part with it for nothing. So the plan of

constructing a middle school could not materialize as nobody was willing to offer land free of cost.

After some days this matter came under discussion in our *Hujra* in the presence of our father. My father asked how much land was needed for that purpose. He was answered that one *Kanal* (one eighths of an acre) was sufficient for the school. My father owned a plot measuring about seven acres just opposite the road leading to our village. As the plot was very close to the village, it could fetch a handsome amount on selling. But my father, putting behind the monetary value and consideration, voluntarily agreed to donate as much land as was required for the school, be it one *Kanal* or more.

People were hopefully surprised. Next day, the *Tehsildar* was sent for and a plot measuring about 6 *Kanal* was transferred in the name of the school. Thereafter the work began and the school was constructed. At the inauguration ceremony of the school, the Deputy Commissioner visited the village. He expressed his desire to see the generous and affluent man who had donated the land for school. He was told that the man had not turned up for the inaugural ceremony. The Deputy Commissioner rose from his chair and said he would himself go to meet that generous man who had done a selfless service for the village. So he came to our *Hujra* to meet my father and expressed his thankfulness for the noble deed he had done. He asked my father why he had not come to the opening ceremony even though he had donated land for this purpose as they would have honored him in the function. My father replied that he had donated land with the sole motive of attaining the pleasure of Allah and Allah's pleasure was sufficient for him as a reward and that he needed no further honor. The school is still running and is

serving as a beacon of knowledge not only for children of our village but also for the children of adjoining villages. The people have named the village after my father's name as '*Danish Garhi*'.

Before the establishment of this school our village had a Primary School. Janab Syed Saleh Shah Sahib was the Headmaster of the school. He served in the school in the capacity of Headmaster for 45 years. As he was the only teacher in the school, calling him Headmaster sounds strange. Shah Sahib was all in all here. Everyone in the village knew him, as most of the villagers had been his students.

Shah Sahib was held in high esteem in the village. After talking the role call in the school he would go round the village to bring the absentees to the class. He would himself bring such children holding them by his hand. Some children used to hide in the fields skipping classes, but Shah Sahib would send the monitor of the class and a few other students to bring them. He would regularly inspect the teeth and nails of the children and used to punish those children who had dirty teeth and long nails. I had also been his student for four years and I am indebted to him for the affection he showered on me and his valuable role in shaping my personality and character. Shah Sahib's village was about five miles away from ours. He had to walk ten miles daily. So the villagers used to provide him lunch by turn. People say that he lived up to hundred years. Now I have no trace of his progeny. Yet he was a great benefactor of our village. The dedication, affection, attention and sincerity with which he imparted knowledge & education to the village children is rarely to be found even in the parents of those children.

My Parents

I, as a private secretary, was among the members of the entourage of *Hadrat Khalifatul Masih III* during his tour of America and Canada in the year 1976. In Canada we were staying at Hotel 'Inn on the Park'. One day my wife rang me up. Her voice was trembling. I asked what the matter was. She replied that how she could break the sad news to me I asked her to take heart and tell me plainly and not to worry about. She revealed the shocking news that my father had passed away. It was as though lightning had struck me. The phone fell from my hands and tears welled up in my eyes. A friend of mine who was sitting by me asked me what had happened. I told him that my father had passed away. He immediately went and informed *Hudur* of my father's death. At once *Hudur* came into my room and held me in a long and affectionate embrace. Then he recited *inna lillah-e wa inna ilahe rajeoo* and consoled me by saying that every one has to depart from this world. Only God is Eternal. *Hudur* further said that I should be thankful to Allah for He had always made me source of happiness for my father. Hadhrat Begum Sahiba conveyed her deep condolences to me.

At the death of my father I felt as though I had been deprived of a protective shade, as if the roof of my house had been blown off, and there was no visible shelter left to save me from sun, storm or rain. The prayers and supplications he offered all his life served as a shield for me against evil forces. Now I had been deprived of those prayers. Truly speaking, soon after my father's demise a string of hardships and misfortunes befell my life one after another, and I deeply missed him at such times.

But it cannot be denied that it was through the blessings of his prayers that by the grace of Allah I always

escaped unharmed through all hardships, misfortunes and odd circumstances. Even now I feel the presence of his prayers with me. Many a time I recall to my mind those great words of *Hadrat Amma Jan* with which she consoled her children at the demise of *Hadrat Masih Mauood Alaihisslam*.

She said :

“Your father has left behind a treasure trove of prayers which will avail you throughout your life.”

The same is the case with me. I feel the presence of my parent’s prayers around me like a strong fortification that protects me. They are like a treasure for me which I use for my benefit from time to time. May Allah by His sheer grace and mercy raise the status of my parents in heaven. *Ameen*.

The name of my mother was Fatima Bibi. Being the eldest daughter of Hadrat Moulvi Mohammad Ilyas Khan, she was very dear to her father. Hadrat Moulvi Sahib was a resident of village *Mastaung* in Baluchistan. My mother was probably born in *Mastaung*. She was very fortunate for having been brought up under the benign care of a greatly pious man like Hadrat Moulvi Mohammad Ilyas Khan. Her mother’s name was Ashraf Bibi. She was married to my father in her early age. At the time of marriage, my father was posted in *Mastaung*. After a few years my parents returned to their ancestral village and spent the rest of their lives in the village. The mutual affection, love, respect and co-operation between my father and mother was exemplary. The members of our family looked upon them as their role model. I never saw my parents at variance with each other.

My mother did not have much education as in those days it was not customary to educate the girls. However, she had learnt to read the Holy Quran at home. She recited the Holy Quran daily without fail but in a subdued tone. She always performed '*Wudhu*' (ablution) before the recitation.

She was very fond of neat and clean dresses. So she wore a newly washed dress everyday. She was very punctual in oiling and combing her hair. Hospitality was the most salient feature of her character. Our village being close to Peshawar, on every Sunday some *Ahmadi* brothers would pay a visit to our house. After spending the whole day conversing with my father, they would repair to Peshawar. Some of those people used to be our relatives while others were not. My mother considered it an honor to serve those guests. My mother was an excellent cook. '*Pulav*' & '*Parathe*' prepared by her were very favorite with the guests.

Women, in particular, indulge in backbiting but by the grace of Allah my mother was absolutely untouched by this evil. It was very uncharacteristic of her that she should indulge in backbiting. I never heard her speak evil of anybody behind his/her back.

Although there were some occasions when some people offended her, yet she never complained against them and exercised patience and restraint. Anger was unknown to her character. I never saw her beating her children, or grandchildren. She never used any offensive language. If she was displeased with somebody she would just keep quite. Her quietness gave us the indication that she was angry with someone but very soon she would calm down her anger and returned to her usual cheerful mood.

She had profound faith in the acceptance of prayers. She was always murmuring prayers even while doing her daily chores. Most often she was reciting '*Durood*' (invoking blessings upon the Holy Prophet). She would utter her prayers both silently and in an audible voice. Seeing her lips shaking we would guess that she was praying.

Her affection for us was so deep and great that she never cared for her own comforts. As a student of middle school when I turned home in the scorching heat of summer, I found her waiting for me at the door. She would keep cool water ready in the bathroom for me. By the time I had refreshed myself from the bath, food would have been ready. She would fan me even against my request for not doing so, while I relished the food.

My mother would not sleep until I went to bed. When I joined school at Qadian I came to the village during summer vacations. When the time to return to Qadian came, my mother would give me not only food for the journey but also home made cake and biscuits which lasted a few weeks. Having spent most of my school life in a boarding house and thereafter gone to London, I could not enjoy the loving company of my affectionate mother for long. My brother Colonel Nazeer Ahmad had been very fortunate for having been in the company of our mother. He also had the opportunity to serve her in her old age. Mother was freer with Nazeer Ahmad than with me.

My mother paid great attention towards the upbringing of my sisters. Being the lonely *Ahmadi* family in the village, our sisters were at a disadvantage to learn the basics of Ahmadiyyat. But my mother made up this deficiency through her excellent upbringing. She taught the Holy Quran to all her children several times. She made

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us punctual in five daily prayers and above all, she enveloped us in her prayers.

My mother was a *Musia* (a 'testator' – one who voluntarily agrees to donate at least 1/10 of his/her income for the *Jamat*). She was buried in the *Bahisti Maqbara* Qadian, which is also the final resting place of my father. May Allah grant both of them His pleasure and raise their station in heaven. Ameen.

My father's name was Danishmand Khan. He was born in 1890 in the village *Muhibb Banda*. His father's name (my grandfather) was Abdul Hannan Khan. My grandfather who owned several acres of land, was very strict and had a fiery temperament. Being illiterate, he would often go out of control in anger. His fiery temperament proved fatal for him as one day his own nephew shot him dead. When my father embraced *Ahmadiyyat* during his posting in *Mastaung*, he wrote a letter to his father informing him of this development. My grandfather was greatly shocked to learn about this. He went to the Imam of the local village mosque and asked him to write a reply to the letter. The Mullah, on reading this letter tried to parry the question evade and said;

"Khan Sahib your son has turned an apostate and Kaaqir and it is not advisable to reply to the letter of an apostate. You had better not give a reply."

Grandfather was not satisfied with the *Mulla's* reply. However, he plunged in to a deep grief which made him seriously ill. His weakness grew day by day. He would often say to my grandmother:

"Danishmand has buried me alive (by embracing Ahmadiyyat). He has made my head hang in shame in the village."

But my grandmother would say that if Danishmand (my father) had accepted something as truth, there was no need to get angry with him as it was a matter between him and his God. By my grandfather was not to be calmed down. When the conditions of my grandfather badly deteriorated, my grandmother sent for my father asking him to see his father. My father became anxious to learn about his father's illness and he at once left for the village. My grandfather was lying in the bed. He had become very thin and weak due to prolonged illness. Both father and son wept embracing each other. Then my grandfather said in a voice choked with emotion.

"Danishmand, had you committed theft, robbery or even murder, I would not have grieved but by embracing Ahmadiyyat you have disgraced me in the village and now I cannot show my face to anyone".

My father replied that by embracing Ahmadiyyat he had repented of all his past misdeeds and sins. He said that prior to coming into the fold of Ahmadiyyat he had not been regular in observing daily prayers, but now he had become not only punctual in daily prayers but offered *Tahajjud* also; earlier he did not observe fast, now apart from being regular in observing fast during *Ramdhan*, he kept voluntary fasts also; earlier he never used to recite the Holy Quran, now besides becoming regular in reciting the Holy Quran, he was learning its meaning also. Then he asked his father if all those actions of his were un-Islamic, and if he had not observed that he had changed into a better man. But all the arguments had no effect on my grandfather. He remained adamant in his foolish self assertions. He asked my father to renounce his faith in Ahmadiyyat and then do what he pleased, be it indulging

in theft, robbery, adultery or murder, he would not mind. But my father was steadfast in his faith. He never wanted to retrace his steps. My father remained very upset for a couple of days. Dialogue between father and son continued daily. Father insisted upon his stand that his son should abjure his new faith. But the son was ready to risk even his life for Ahmadiyyat. During the course of discussion my grandfather said that as he was illiterate and could not understand everything his son said, my father should discuss the matter with the village *Moulvi*. On his father's advice, the son went to the village *Moulvi* to discuss the matter. The *Moulvi* told my father that my grandfather had more than once asked him to hold a debate with his son. My father and the *Moulvi* argued about the death of Jesus the whole day. At last the *Moulvi* admitted that the Holy Quran and Hadith do not support that Jesus is still alive but most of the Muslim clerics do believe that Jesus is alive. My father declared that he was bound to believe in what the Quran & Hadith say, and that he did not care about what the *Moultvies* believe in. Thus this debate came to an inconclusive end.

Some more days passed. One evening my grandfather told my grandmother that the next day he would take Danishmand to the village mosque for *Fajr* prayer and would ask him to join prayers behind the village *Moulvi*, and would adjure him to renounce his faith in *Ahmadiyyat*. He also vowed that if Danishmand did not comply with his orders he would kill him there and then. Seeing a pistol under the pillow of my grandfather, my grandmother was greatly perturbed. She sent a servant to the *Hujra* where my father was sleeping. The servant conveyed the message that either he should obey his father or get ready to be killed by the next day.

My father knew the unpredictable temperament of his father very well. He had no doubts in his mind that his father would not hesitate even for a moment to execute his plan of killing him if he did not comply with his orders. So, my father left his village and reached *Mastaung* overnight. Since that day my father could not come to his village until my grandfather himself fell a victim to the gun shot of his own nephew.

I have written a separate chapter dealing with the circumstances leading to the acceptance of *Ahmadiyyat* of my father. I intend write his biography. So I will not write any more about him here.

My father was a zealous preacher of Islam. He had acquired so much knowledge about Islam by reading the books of the Promised Massiah ^{a.s} that by the grace of Allah he could outface even the greatest of *Moulvis*. He cherished deep love and reverence for the Holy Quran; whenever he heard recitation of the Quran, he would sit down and also advise us to do the same.

He would often say those *Moulvies* were no match for him as he had Holy Quran on his side and the *Moulvies* had nothing but fictitious stories. His way of preaching was very interesting and impressive. He was particularly expert in producing retaliatory arguments.

He had deep reverence for *Ahmadiyyat* and he was always prepared to safeguard the honor of *Ahmadiyyat* even at the cost of his life. I would here narrate a small incident which proves this point. One day my father was sitting outside a court waiting for the hearing of one of his cases. Another *Khan Sahib* came there with his servants-in-waiting and bodyguards and sat beside my father. He, too, had come to appear in the court in connection with his case. My father had *Braheen-e-Ahmadiyya*, authored by

the Promised Messiah^{a.s} with him. When Khan Sahib saw this book, he asked my father what book it was. My father replied that this is a book written by *Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib Qadiani*, the Reformer and Prophet of the present age.

At the mention of the name of the Promised Messiah, Khan Sahib got infuriated and used offensive language for the Promised Messiah. My father at once swung into action and snatched the pistol from his hands and pointing it towards him asked him to eat his words and use the same offensive words for himself otherwise he would shoot him dead on the spot. *Khan Sahib* was taken unawares by this sudden turn of events. He was terribly frightened and complied with my father's order. He begged pardon for what he uttered in ignorance and told my father that he had heard that *Ahmadies* are soft spoken and kind hearted people but that my father belied his expectations. My father told *Khan Sahib* that if he had abused him he would not have retaliated, but when he abused his beloved, the Promised Messiah^{a.s}, he could not contain his patience. Anyway the heat died down and a friendly conversation ensued. My father conveyed the message of *Ahmadiyyat* to him. After some time both of them went their way.

My father was vouchsafed true dreams and visions. Many of his dreams that he told us were fulfilled. He was also a recipient of revelations. We have been a witness to his revelations. I will deal with this topic in his biography, *Insha Allah*.

I feel it necessary to narrate a faith-raising incident here. In the beginning of the year 1960 an enemy of my father shot at him during the night. The bullet hit him below his arm. No first aid was available in the village.

My father fell unconsciousness due to over bleeding. The next day my brother Col. Nazeer Ahmad, who was at that time in *Naushehra* as a Lieutenant, took him to C.M.H in *Naushehra* for treatment. His wound had gone septic.

The doctors decided to amputate his arm in order to save his life. The doctors told my brother that there was not much hope of his father's recovery as his age was above 70. Due to over bleeding and his old age there were many complications to be faced during the operation. My brother gave his consent for carrying out the operation. He asked the doctors to go ahead with their decision. Whatever might the result be, he would accept it as the will of God.

My brother informed me of these developments. At that time I was in London. He wrote that there was little hope of father's survival and by the time this letter reached me, father might have breathed his last. After going through the letter I felt very disturbed and grieved. I got almost panicky and went to the *Fazl* Mosque London. There was nobody in the mosque. I lay in prostration and prayed fervently to God in these words:

“O My Lord, I am the eldest son of my father. He had dedicated me for *Ahmadiyyat* in order to attain Thy Pleasure. My sisters are yet to be married. I am in a foreign land. My younger brother has to bear all the burden. Neither of us can stay in the village with father. If under these circumstances my father dies, my sisters would be left helpless with no guardian over them. In the event of my father's death, I might feel constrained against my wishes to break my covenant *Waqf*. O My God! show a miracle by your sheer grace and save my father from this

impending death and guard us against consequential hardships. Amen.”

Everybody must die and my father, too, had to die one day. But under those circumstances his death would have put us in dire straits.

After praying in those words I went home. My heart was filled with sadness, and I spent all the day praying. In those days telephone communication was not well developed, so I could not get any news about my father immediately.

At night, in my sleep I saw an elderly person. He gently caressed my forehead with his palm and told me not to worry. He gave me the glad tidings that Allah has accepted my prayers and granted ten more years of life to my father. The next day I wrote a letter to my brother Nazeer Ahmad narrating the whole incident. My letter reached him at a time when the doctor was in a quandary whether they should conduct the operation or not. My brother showed my letter to the doctor who was an accomplished surgeon and said with great conviction:

“My brother is a soldier of God’s army.

His dream cannot be false. You may proceed with the operation without any fear. My father will live for ten more years. *Inshallah.*”

The doctor was amazed at our profound and unshakable faith in God.

By the grace of Allah the operation was successful. My father recovered but he was minus a hand which was martyred in the cause of Allah. The promised life of ten years passed. During this period I met him twice.

One day my father wrote me letter. It read:

A MEMOIR

“The ten years of life granted to me by Allah is now about to be completed. Now I am ready to undertake my last journey.”

Once again I was distressed to read the letter and knelt down before the Almighty *Allah*. I closed the doors of the *Fazl* Mosque and fell in prostration before *Allah* and prayed to him to grant more life to my father. My *Allah* answers and accepts the prayers of his humble servants. He manifests His signs through the acceptance of their prayers. He makes no distinction between men while accepting their prayers. Nobody can claim to be the sole favorite of God. The purpose of narrating such incident is not to glorify myself in any way. I am just recounting the blessings of *Allah* I have experienced. This may serve as an inspiration for my children so that they might feel an inner urge to follow the footsteps of their parents.

When I fell asleep after offering my prayers, I saw the same holy person, who appeared in my dream ten years ago, again in my dream. He again assured me that Allah has accepted my prayers and that Allah has extended my father's life by five more years. I wrote this to my father. He told *Hadrat Moulana Abul Ata Sahib* about my dreams. At this *Hadrat Moulana Sahib* insisted that my father should give in writing what his son had been promised in the dream so that he could publish it in “*Al-Furqan*” (a monthly journal published from *Rabwah*).

After five years, one day my father suddenly fell down from the roof of our house and died. *Inna lillahw wa inna ilehe rajeoon.*

I reproduce here the letters written by Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IV ^(peace be upon him) in which he described my father in the following words:

“Your letter always reminds me of your noble father and turns my attention to pray for him. His words and actions had never been at variance. He was an embodiment of truth and devotion. I shared a deep relation with him which reflected in my prayers from time to time.

May Allah rain His grace upon him and enable his progeny to follow his noble footsteps. *Ameen.*

Wasslam

Mirza Tahir Ahmad”



“Whenever occasion arose I have always prayed for you in the past. You are a “*Waqife-Zindagi*” (one who has dedicated his life for the *Jamat*) and I shared a strong bond with your late father. Both these facts act as a stimulus for me to pray for you.

Very often we met on the way. Our meeting never used to be just a formal one like the mere exchanging of customary greetings. But we would stop and enquire about each other’s welfare. Both of us used to enjoy such wayside meetings. Sometimes we met while going towards or returning from the mosque and enjoyed talking while walking together. He would often narrate soul-inspiring incidents of his life.

I have always felt his warmth of affection that was for me in particular. I do hope that he too appreciated my affection for him. Had there been no other reason to pray

for you, this (*a strong sense of relationships with my father –author*) would have been sufficient.

I consider noble parents to be a source of everlasting blessings, as their very nobility inspires others to pray, which is in itself a great blessing. Nobody can count the favors or repay the debt of such noble parents.

3.7.91

Wasslam

Mirza Tahir Ahmad.”

My Father’s Acceptance of Ahmadiyyat

My father had left his village for Baluchistan in his early youth. He got a job in the Jail at *Mastaung*. When he was leaving his house, my grandfather warned him against making any contacts with the *Qadianis*, as they, in his opinion, were worse than the Christians and Jews. My father promised him that he would keep himself at bay from *Ahmadies* and he would not fall a prey to them.

My father had neither knowledge about Ahmadiyyat nor had he ever met any *Ahmadi*. He was not interested in Ahmadiyyat. *Mastaung* was a small town with a small population. Most of the inhabitants were *Balauch* and others were *Pakhtun*.

My father had been allotted a large residential quarter equipped with all facilities. He was also given a small subordinate staff. Thus he was enjoying his job and leading a happy life there.

It was the year 1921 C.E. One Friday my father was going to attend *Jumma* Prayers in the *Jamia* Mosque of

Mastaung. Hadhrat Maoulvi Mohammad Ilyas Khan Sahib was coming from the opposite side. After exchanging customary greetings of *Asslamo Alaikum*, both of them introduced themselves to each other. *Moulvi Ilyas Sahib* (who later became my maternal grandfather) told my father that he knew his father (my grandfather) very well and both of them were very good friends and he had visited our village a couple of times. He also told my father that he belonged to the *Ahmadiyya Jamat*. My father did not like this, yet was very impressed with his noble bearing and his spiritually radiant face. He often told us that he would think that it could not have been a liar's face.

He asked my father where he was going to. He replied that he was going to attend *Jumma* prayer. At this *Moulvi Sahib* said he too was going for that same purpose to the house of an Ahmadi, who lived nearby, where they offered *Jumma* prayer. *Moulvi Sahib* invited my father to join him in the prayer. After a bit of hesitation my father agreed to accompany him on the condition that though he would listen to *Khutba* (Friday sermon) he would not join prayers with them. Instead he would say his prayers separately. *Moulvi Sahib* readily accepted this condition and told him that he could do so without any hesitation.

My father used to tell us that he agreed to accompany *Moulvi Sahib* just to watch what the *Ahmadis* did during their prayers, as he had been told that *Ahmadis* play music and songs in their prayers.

An *Ahmadi* family lived nearby where all the *Ahmadis* of that locality had gathered for *Jumma* prayer. There were hardly eight to ten members there. My father sat in a corner.

The intense and fervent weeping and crying of *Ahmadis* offering prayers in that house greatly surprised and moved my father. *Moulvi Sahib* delivered the Friday sermon. This sermon was about hypocrites as described in the verses of *Sura Baqrah*, the second chapter in the Holy Quran.

Moulvi Sahib described the symptoms of hypocrites. My father felt those very symptoms existed in him. He was very disturbed to discover in himself the signs of a hypocrite as described in the Holy Quran. He was shaken to the bone. He thought that the *Moulvi Sahib* was pre-informed about his hypocritical and spiritually degraded life, and that was why he had made it a topic of his Friday sermon. After the prayer, tea was served. During tea *Mouvli Sahib* gave such an excellent interpretation of some of the verses of the Holy Quran that he could not help admiring him.

When they came out of the house, my father asked *Moulvi Sahib* how he knew about his hypocritical life. At this *Moulvi Sahib* was taken aback and said that he had met him for the first time, whatever he described in the *Khutba* it was just a commentary of the verses of the Holy Quran.

This was the brief contact with the *Moulvi Sahib*. Since then many weeks passed. My father neither had the chance to meet *Moulvi Sahib* nor did he bother to know more about *Ahmadiyyat*. This brief contact with *Moulvi Sahib* became a thing of the past for my father.

It was the month of December and Mastaung had started to witness snowfall. The streets were covered with snow and it was extremely cold. My father had retired to his home after the day's work. His residential quarter was inside the Jail premises. He lit the lantern. His meals were

ready. He ate his meals and settled down on his bed. He asked his attendant, who was a prisoner, to leave him. Then he put out the lamp and lay down on his bed.

At midnight my father felt as somebody was pressing his toe hard. He was startled started in his sleep and got up. He heard a voice: "Get up and do the *Bait*" (*Bait* – Oath of allegiance). He at once lit the lamp. He searched every room of his house, but nobody was there. Then he thought that none could enter such a strictly guarded prison, and the weather was too inclement for anybody, even if he be a thief, to venture out with the motive of stealing. So he again lay down on his bed, put out his lamp and soon fell fast asleep.

After a short while the same thing happened: my father was startled in his sleep as though he felt someone was pressing on his toe. He woke up. Again he heard the same voice. "Get up and do the *Bait*". My father became nervous; he lit the lamp and spent the rest of night keeping awake. During the day he completely forgot what had happened at night. The next night no sooner did he fell asleep than the same thing happened again and the same voice was heard. – 'Get up and do *Bait*.' My father was terribly frightened and he spent the whole night keeping awake.

He told us that he had never heard the word *Bait* before. He was greatly perturbed in his mind and could not decide what to do or whom should he consult about it. At last he made up his mind to approach the *mulla* of the nearest mosque to know the meaning of the word '*Bait*'. He came out of the house and started walking on the pavement. Allah's destiny had already started its course of action. My father saw Hadhrat Moulvi Mohammad Ilyas Khan Sahib approaching towards him. Seeing my father's

eyes swollen he asked if anything was wrong with him. My father replied in the affirmative and said that he was in deep trouble. After narrating the whole episode of the previous nights he asked *Moulvi Sahib* the meaning of *Bait*. *Moulvi Sahib* explained the meaning. Then my father asked him where and at whose hands he should do the *Bait*. To this *Moulvi Sahib* replied that *Bait* is performed in Qadian at the hands of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II. My father told *Moulvi Sahib* that he wanted to do *Bait* at the earliest as he felt greatly disturbed. *Moulvi Sahib* took my father to his house and filled up the *Bait*-form and got it signed by him. He then assured my father that nobody would disturb him in his sleep afterwards.

My father came back home. He was greatly frightened. Nevertheless he fell asleep and soon sank into deep slumber.

The night passed off peacefully. Nobody awakened him in his sleep or asked him to do *Bait* as he had already done the *Bait*.

After a few days Hadhrat Moulvi Mohammad Ilyas Khan Sahib met my father on the way. He asked him to visit him in his leisure hours to learn the Holy Quran and its commentary. My father told him that in his childhood he had sworn not to recite the Quran. At this *Moulvi Sahib* was greatly surprised and asked my father how he had taken such a blasphemous oath despite being a Muslim. My father explained to him the exact reasons which prompted him to take such an ignominious oath. He said that his father had sent him to the *Mulla* of the village to learn the Quran. After he had learnt to read the Arabic text of the Quran, the *Moulvi* started to teach him its meaning. During this course, some questions rose in his mind and he asked the *Mulla* to answer them. The *Moulvi* got infuriated

and told him that it was blasphemous to ask questions about the Quran and if he did that he would turn an infidel. That was the reason behind my father's oath of not to recite the Quran. He would tell us that he thought that if by trying to understand and learn a book a man turns an infidel, it was better not to read that book.

After listening to the whole episode *Moulvi Sahib* told my father that he would teach him the Holy Quran, explain its meaning even if it would take ten days for him to understand a single point, and that he would also answer all his queries to his satisfaction. The holy Quran inspires faith and not infidelity. The Quran is guidance even for the righteous. There was no question of one turning an infidel by trying to understand or raising some questions about it. Father agreed to learn the Quran and he became a student of *Moulvi Sahib*.

The Bait-form of my father was sent to Qadian. A few days later a postcard signed by Hadhrat Mufti Mohammad Sadiq Sahib, the Private Sectary to Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II, was received. It said:

“*Hudur* has accepted your *Bait*. You should especially concentrate upon offering daily prayers and keep on praying.”

This card was also seen by a colleague of my father, who was a *Mulla*. He came to my father in state of anxiety and asked what he had done. He told him that he had become a *Kafir* and he would be persecuted in Mastaung. My father firmly replied that he did not care about him or anyone else. He had found the truth. Even if the whole world turned against him, it could not deter him from his new faith.

This is the story of my father's acceptance of Ahmadiyyat. He would say he did not become Ahmadi through anyone's preaching; rather God Himself had guided him towards Ahmadiyyat.

Memories of Qadian

My father decided to attend the Jalsa Salana Qadian being held in December 1944. He took me and my brother Nazeer Ahmad with him. We left for Lahore by train from Peshawar. The compartment we boarded was reserved for the Ahmadies. As the train steamed off, we all raised our hands for silent congregational prayers. Everybody was sobbing and sighing during the prayer. I was very moved by this scene. When the prayers were finished, some young Ahmadi men raised the slogans of *Allah-O Akbar*. (God is great).

The train was now moving at full speed towards Lahore. In our compartment we had Mian Mohammad Yousaf, a bullion dealer, who recited Poems from *Dure-e-Samin* (A collection of poems composed by the Promised Messiah) all through the journey. Though his voice was not very pleasant to the ears, yet his zeal for reciting poems impressed the occupants of the compartments. We reached Lahore at dawn.

From Lahore we took another train for Amritsar. Amritsar is not very far from Lahore. When we reached Amritsar, the train bound for Qadian was standing on the platform. We boarded the train which was largely occupied by Ahmadi passengers, barring a few Sikhs. Slogans of *Allah-O Akbar* resounded in the train as it started moving. Again silent prayers were offered here and I was deeply moved hearing the sighs and moans in the prayers. All through the journey from Amritsar to Qadian

the slogans of *Allah-O Akbar* filled the air. The train reached Qadian in the evening where we found *Khuddam* standing to welcome and help us. They took us to our lodging.

The next day after *Fajr* prayer we went to a restaurant where a long table was laid with cake, pastry and other eatables. A helper with a tea kettle in hand was pouring tea into the cups of customers.

We ate to our heart's content and came to the counter to pay the bill. We told the owner what we had eaten. He calculated the price and we paid it. I was surprised to note that the owner easily believed what we told him. All the customers did the same as we did. Nobody was suspected to be cheating the owner. This strange scene of honesty had never been witnessed by me before and it left an indelible impression on my mind which is vivid even today. This was the revolution of change that Ahmadiyyat brought about in its adherents.

To me the atmosphere of Qadian seemed totally different from the rest of the world. One was greeted with the salutation of *Asslamo Alaikum* everywhere in Qadian. The next day my father told me and my brother to put a neat & clean dress as *Hudur* (Khalifatul Massih II) was going to meet the Ahmadies of the Frontier Province in the evening. I waited for the evening as I had not yet seen *Hudur*; though I had seen *Hudur's* photographs. We went to *Qasr-e Khilafat* in the evening. We were led to a waiting room. Mian Mohammad Yousaf the bullion dealer from Peshawar began recite poems from the *Dure-e-Samin*. We were anxiously waiting to be led to *Hudur's* presence. Hadhrat Qazi Mohammad Yousaf, *Ameer Jammat Ahmadiyya* Frontier Province, was also with us. He was my uncle. He knew every Ahmadi of Frontier

Province by face. At last the door was opened. We made a queue. At first Hadhrat Mohammad Yousaf Sahib met *Hudur* and he sat on the right side of *Hudur*. Then all the other people shook hands with *Hudur* and Hadhrat Qazi Sahib introduced everyone to *Hudur*.

I was spell-bound to see the radiant and refulgent face of *Hudur*. It was so effulgent and beautiful that I was spontaneously drawn towards it and my eyes were riveted on it. The ambience in the room was spiritual and enrapturing. *Hudur* was seated on a chair, half wrapped up in a blanket. Devotees moved forward one by one in a disciplined manner and greeted *Hudur* with *Asslamo Alaikum* and shook hands with *Hudur* giving a devotional kiss, and then went on. When my turn came, *Hudur* held out his hand. After a warm handshake I kissed *Hudur*'s hands. The touch of *Hudur*'s blessed hands sent an emotional wave in my whole body and I was so overwhelmed by it that I began to shiver.

At that time I was a lad of just 13 years. I was absolutely a stranger to the spiritual world. But the blessed meeting with *Hudur* inspired a new strength and devotion in me and I totally succumbed to the spiritual majesty of *Hudur*. I literally became enamored of *Hudur*'s personality.

After the meeting when we came back to our lodging everyone was talking about the warm and affectionate meeting with *Hudur*. Everybody considered himself fortunate for having been blessed with the opportunity of meeting *Hudur*.

I do not remember much about the speeches made at the Jalsa or the persons who made these speeches: But I listened to all the addresses of *Hudur*. I could not

understand even a single word of them as I did not know any other language except Pashto at that time.

The bazaar's of Qadian during the Jalsa days used to be buzz with activities; crowded with people. At the time of prayers mosques were packed to their capacity. The devotees prayed with such fervency and passion that their wailings and cries during prostration gave the beholder an impression that the earth was being shaken. I could not make out why those people shed tears during prayers. However, these faith inspiring scenes were entrenched in my memory and they gradually began to shape my future life.

The Jalsa being over, we embarked upon our return journey. During the journey my father put a question to me, "How did you like Qadian?" I replied that it was extremely good and beautiful. Then he asked how I would feel if I was admitted in the school at Qadian. I literally jumped at this idea and gave my consent to it. The next year, i.e. in 1945, my uncle at the behest of my father brought me to Qadian. The scene of Qadian was totally different from what I had seen during Jalsa days.

There was no hustle and bustle in the streets and market. At first I was dismayed to see this deserted look but soon consoled myself with the thought that the buzz of excitement and activities of Jalsa days could not be possible during normal days. The next day I was ushered into the presence of Hadrat Syed Mohammad Shah Sahib, the Headmaster of Taleem-ul Islam High School, Qadian. Hadrat Shah Sahib had an attractive personality. He was noble in character and bearing and very gentle and kind in speech. He was also the brother-in-law of Hadrat Khalifatul Massih II. He belonged to a noble Syed family. Never in my life had I seen such a noble, kind, courteous

and polite person as Hadrat Shas Sahib. He admitted me in the eighth standard. Then he gave me a note of reference for Hadrat Sufi Ghulam Mohammad Sahib, may Allah be pleased with him, who was the superintendent of *Tahrik Jadid* hostel. Hadrat Sufi Sahib was a companion of the Promised Messiah^{a.s}. His son Mubarak Muslehuddin Ahmad became my friend in those days and this friendship is still as warm as was at that time. Both of us filled the *Waqf* form in the same year and have been together since then. My uncle left after my admission to the hostel. This was the first time that I had been away from my parents and relatives. For the first few days I missed them very much and wept bitterly. Ignorance of Urdu and Punjabi language added to my problems. I could communicate with teachers and students except through signs. The initial days had been very hard for me. There were at least three or four *Pathan* students. I would spend most of the time with them. Within five months I was able to communicate with my teachers and friends in Urdu.

Our hostel was housed in a large and spacious building. Besides students from India there were students from Africa and some other countries. We were woken up at dawn for the *Fajr* Prayers. After performing "*Whudhu*" (ablution) we were taken to the mosque in a queue. After *Fajr* prayer we listened to the discourse on the Holy Quran and *Hadith* regularly. Students of the hostel were taken to the mosque for all the five daily prayers in a queue.

The school taught the syllabus as approved by the Government but "*Deenayat*" was also taught as a compulsory subject. Only those students who got a pass in the *Deenayat* were considered eligible for admission to the University Examination.

The days spent by me in the Taleem-ul Islam High School and *Tehrik Jadid* Hostel contributed much in shaping my career as servant of Islam. Besides the faith-inspiring sermons and speeches of Hadrat Khalifatul Massih II, the blessed company of the “*Sahaba*” and the excellent teaching and loving care of my teachers created a strong passion and love in my soul and body for the Islam and Ahmadiyyat.

Our teachers taught with utmost devotion, sincerity and selflessness. There was no concept of private tuition in these days. After school hours some teachers took tuitions of weak students without taking any fee. Besides, they prayed for their students. One of our teachers was Chaudhary Abdus Rehman Sahib who taught us Mathematics. When the school was shifted to Chinyot he was appointed as a teacher in our school. He was so fond of prayers that whenever he entered our class he used to recite the following prayer aloud:

(here Arabic text with translation from Holy Quran will be inserted)

Here I want to share a faith-inspiring incident related to Chaudhry Abdul Rahman Sahib. This happened after the Taleem-ul Islam High School had been shifted to Sialkot and when I was in 10th class. In those days we were living in straitened circumstances. Hadrath Chaudhary Sahib was the headmaster of our school. After Partition (1947) our class was the first batch consisting of a few students to appear in the Matriculation Examination being conducted by the Punjab University. Hadrat Khalifatul Massih II sent a message to the Hadrat Shah Sahib that this year each student of 10th class should get at least a first division in the annual exam. *Hudur* further said that he would pray for us and instructed Shah Sahib to

make the students study hard and pray fervently to achieve the goal fixed for them. It was *Hudur*'s intense desire that the first batch of 10th class of the school appearing for the University exam after Partition (1947) should succeed with distinction.

Under *Hudur*'s instructions our teaches worked very hard upon us day and night. Extra classes after school hours were conducted. We were woken up for *Tahajud* prayer and all of us prayed passionately to live up to the expectations of *Hudur*. Chaudhry Abdul Rehman Sahib was our Maths teacher. He not only took great pains to teach us but also advised us to pray. He himself became an embodiment of prayer during those days. Before starting the class work he would conduct collective silent prayers. Now the days of exams drew near. We had prepared well for the exams. I was very weak in Mathematics and Chaudhary Sahib was very worried about me, so he would pay extra attention to my studies. On the day of the Maths exam, he woke us up at early in the morning and asked us to come to the class room. After offering silent prayers, he wrote some randomly selected sums on the black board and asked the students to solve them. He was preparing us for the exam. The sums given by him were very difficult. So he solved them for us on the black board.

We entered the examination hall. Question papers were given. As had been our regular practice we raised our hands for prayers before getting on to start answering the sums. After finishing prayer, when I had a look at the question papers I was amazed to find all the sums in the question paper were exactly the same which Chaudhry Sahib solved for us on the blackboard that morning. I had crammed those sums. I solved all the sums in a very short time. I was the first to come out of the examination hall.

Chaudhry Sahib was pacing up and down outside the hall. Seeing me came out of the hall before time, he thought I had not solved the paper completely. When he saw that all the sums set in the question paper were the ones he solved for us that morning, he prostrated on the ground to offer his gratitude to Allah. His neat & clean dress got completely soiled but he did not care about that and lay in prostration for a long time. Then he stood up and embraced me and asked if I had answered all the sums correctly. I said I had solved the sums to my satisfaction. Then he pointed his finger at a sum and asked me to solve it which I did correctly. He was satisfied and began to recite *Alhamdulillah* repeatedly. The results were declared in due course. All the students of Taleem-ul Islam High School had secured first division. This news was published on the front page of the *Alfazl*. After few days when all the students of our class met *Hudur*, he congratulated us, gave his blessings and also served us with sweets.

Such were the Ahmadi teachers. They paid little heed to monetary considerations. They were working for a good cause and for that cause they never cared for their own comforts. Imparting knowledge with selfless devotion had always been their main objective. In our schools salaries were very low as compared to their counterparts in other schools yet they never grumbled about it. They could have got better pay and perks in other schools if they had wished so. But that was not their aim. May Allah reward them abundantly and rain His choicest blessings upon them. Ameen.

My studies at Qadian continued till July 1947. I regard this as the golden period of my life. Apart from receiving conventional secular education; I was also benefited with spiritual knowledge. During this period of

my life I underwent amazing metamorphosis. I had the honor to associate with the prominent companions of the Promised Messiah^{a.s.}. I benefited from their blessings in abundance. Above all, I had the blessed opportunity to participate in the *Majlis-e Irfan* conducted by Hadrat Khalifatul Massih II daily after *Maghrib* prayer till *Esha*.

During summer these sessions were held on the terrace of *Masjid Mubarak*, while in winter they were held inside the mosque. No doubt I gained abundant knowledge from these blessed sessions. Moreover I felt a unique strength in my heart being in the blessed company of Hadrat Khalifatul Massih II. In short, attending these spiritual sessions offered me the opportunity to act upon the Quranic injunction which says:

“Keep company with the truthful...”

(Al-Tauba: 119).

Now I want to narrate the incident that occurred during my school days in Qadian which had a great impact on my mind and greatly influenced me in the choice of my career and by virtue of which I dedicated my life for the *Jamaat*. One day it was announced in the school and the mosque that Hadrat Moulana Jalaluddin Shams Sahib, the Imam of the London Mosque, was returning to Qadian after putting in ten years of meritorious and successful service. The inhabitants of Qadian were requested to gather at the railway station at the appointed hour to welcome *Hadrat Moulana Sahib*. That day was declared a holiday. Schools, colleges, shops etc. were all closed. We were lined up and taken to the railway station. Hadrat Khalifatul Massih II also reached there after a while. The platform was thronged with the visitors to welcome *Hadrat Moulana Sahib*. Some people were obliged to

stand outside the station as there was no room on the platform.

I was fortunate enough to be very close to Hadrat Khalifatul Massih II. As the train chugged in, the whole area resounded with the slogans of *Allah-O Akbar*. The train stopped. Hadrat Moulana Shams Sahib and Munirul Hasni Sahib, one of the early Ahmadis in Syria, got off the train and went straight to Hadrat Khalifatul Massih II. *Hudur* held Moulana Sahib in a long passionate embrace. Tears welled up in the eyes of both the master and the humble servant. I was moved to see that passionate sight and I thought that this man must have performed some magnificent task for which the *Khalifa* of the time is honoring him with a long embrace. It kindled a desire in my heart that I too should do something remarkable to be blessed with the same warm and nice treatment at the hands of *Hudur*. The seed of dedication for the *Jamaat* was sown in my heart on that very day.

I had the opportunity to meet Hadrat Moulana Shams Sahib on two or three occasions until I got admission in the college. After meeting him I felt as though a spiritual change had taken place in my heart.

During my college days when I had filled up the *Waqf* form, I once saw in a dream that The Holy Prophet^{peace & blessings of Allah be upon him} was standing by me, his face was shining like a full moon. His long hair hung up to his ears. On his right side was standing Hadrat Moulana Shams Sahib. Some other persons were also standing there whom I did not know. Seeing *Hadrat Moulvi Sahib* so close and near to The Holy Prophet^{peace & blessings of Allah be upon him} my love, respect and devotion for *Moulvi Sahib* grew even stronger. After a few days when I came to know of his visit to Lahore, I went to see him and requested him to

join us at tea in the college which he graciously accepted. Over tea I narrated my dream to him, to which he gave the interpretation that I would be blessed with opportunity to serve “*Deen*” the chosen faith of God.

Before leaving for England in January 1959, I went to *Moulana Sahib* and requested him to bless me with some useful advice. The most useful advice he gave was illustrated through an incident that happened during his tenure as a missionary in Syria. Moulana Sahib related the following incident:

By the grace of Allah, through his humble efforts Mr. Munirul Hasni, who belonged to an affluent family, embraced Ahmadiyyat. His zeal, passion and devotion to serve Islam was getting stronger day by day. He would come to the mosque daily to join the *Asar* prayer and thereafter he cooked dinner for me. He would insist on doing that favor for me. We used to dine together at night. One day when we were having dinner I told him that he had not put sufficient salt in the curry and asked him to be careful about it. At this Munirul Hasni Sahib kept silent for a while and said to me “*Moulana Sahib* you know very well that I have a number of servants at my home to look after my needs. I do not even unlace my shoes when I go home. This is also done by a servant. I have never made even a cup of tea at home. I cook here for you only to seek the pleasure of Allah. Otherwise cooking and me! Absolutely no connection at all. Therefore if ever I fail to add salt or other spices in the curry to your taste, you ought to excuse me for that as cooking is not my job.”

Moulana sahib said that he had learnt a valuable lesson from that incident – people who willingly serve us, never do it for the sake of an individual but they do it out of love and devotion for the Ahmadiyyat and of course to

attain the pleasure of Allah. We should, therefore, always bear it in mind that whoever does any favor to us, we owe a debt of gratitude to him and if someone commits any negligence in his duty towards us, we have no right to take him to task or reprimand or criticize him. Then *Moulana Sahib* addressed me in the following words:

“In England you will see that people of higher status and older than you will be ready to serve you with pleasure. But you should not get proud of that. In fact, they are not serving you because you are entitled for that. They serve you out of their attachment, love and reverence and respect for the *Jamaat* and above all to seek the pleasure of Allah. They are in no way bound to serve you.”

This piece of advice from *Moulana Sahib* helped me lot in my life. I always pray for him that Allah may grant him a high station in heaven.

In July, 1947 our school broke up for summer vacation and I came to my native village. In August there was great spate of severe violence and bloodshed in the wake of Partition. Millions of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs & Christians lost their precious lives and tens of thousands of people were rendered homeless. Men of wealth and position were reduced to almost beggars. I witnessed all this with my own eyes. I saw dead bodies of people scattered on the road. It was impossible to understand how it had happened overnight; how man turned hostile against his own kind and how people living in harmony till the previous day became thirsty for one another's blood.

By grace of Allah and under the able leadership and guidance of Hadrat Khalifatul Massih II, the Ahmadies

living at Qadian migrated safely to Pakistan with minimum loss of human lives.

During summer in Qadian the mango and *jamun* (blackberry) trees laden with fruit on either side of the roads used to be the main attraction for us. Fruits of some of the trees would be bought by boarding house officials and were served to us on ripening. The mangoes of Qadian were famous all over the Punjab for their excellent taste, inviting smell, lusciousness and for their availability at very affordable price. We would often go for a picnic to the canal which was two Km away from Qadian. Almost all the people of Qadian would join in this picnic. Food was prepared in large cauldrons. The main items used to be *Pulao* and *Zarda*. Swimming contests were held all the day. Even Hadrat Khalifatul Massih's family and members of the Promised Massih's family also graced these occasions with their presence. Their presence used to be a salient feature at such picnics.

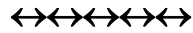
Never had I the opportunity to witness a more delightful and enjoyable atmosphere after Partition than that I had experienced during such picnics at Qadian.

Another regular practice was that like other people we also prayed at the sacred tomb of the Promised Messiah ^{a.s} and the graves of other noble persons daily after *Fajr* prayer. This enhanced our faith and inspired our souls from within. It used to be an exhilarating sight to watch almost all the people of Qadian heading towards *Bahishti Maqbara* after *Fajr* prayer.

Hadrat Massih Mauood ^{a.s} had dedicated a portion of his orchard lying in the west of Qadian for to be used as graveyard which is called *Bahishti Maqbara*, which literally means the heavenly graveyard. He did it under divine command. Hadrat Moulvi Abdul Kareem Sahib

A MEMOIR

Sialkoti was the first person to be buried in *Bahishti Maqbara*. The Promised Messiah ^{a.s} died on 26th May 1908 in Lahore. His body was brought to Qadian and buried in the *Bahishti Maqbara*.



Chapter – II

My Waqf

In the year 1937 my father was in the employment of Sardar Mihammad Bakhtiar Khan of *Domki* (Blochistan), at *Lehri*. My mother, with my brother and sisters, lived in our ancestral village. My maternal grandfather Hadrat Mohammad Ilyas Khan Sahib was permanently settled in *Mastaung* (Blochistan). As my maternal uncle Abdus Salam Khan Sahib was to leave for *Mastaung*, my father sent word to us that we should also come over to *Mastaung* with him. The picture of that Journey is still vivid in my mind. We alighted from train at a station called 'Bed Pat' where a bus was already waiting for us. We boarded the bus along with other passengers. The bus started moving and our journey to *Lehri* was underway. The bus ran through the sandy area as there was no sign of any road through out the course of journey.

The driver of the bus was driving in his own typical style. We reached *Lehri* towards evening. Our father received us and took us to our home, which was very spacious and spread over an area equal to one eighth of an acre. It had many rooms fully furnished and equipped with every possible facility.

After a few days my father told me that Janab Sardar Sahib, the Chief of *Lehri*, wanted to see me. So I and my father one day called on him at his grand *Haveli* (mansion) which was heavily guarded by armed men. As my father was in charge of his properties, the guards received us courteously. We were ushered in to a tastefully

decorated room in which expensive carpets were spread. In one part of the room the floor was covered with white sheets. The Sardar Sahib seated against a huge bolster was waiting for us. He welcomed us and asked us to take our seats. Sardar Sahib had long hair which he covered with a turban. His face was impressive and imposing. He made me sit close to himself.

Discussion began on sundry topics which I could not make out. On reaching home my father told me the entire discussion that had taken place:

Sardar Sahib: It is our desire to make Bashir Ahmad our son. We shall send him to England for higher education and the entire expenses will be borne by us.

Father : So kind of you Sardar Sahib for this. May Allah reward you abundantly. But I want to dedicate my son in the service of Allah and by doing this I want to emulate the act of Hadrat Ibrahim and Hadrat Ismail. I have struck this bargain with Allah and I can not back track from it. Now Bashir Ahmad is His.

Sardar Sahib: I am surprised to hear your words. We want to give him the best of education to make his future bright.

Father: I am very grateful to you but I see his bright future in his becoming a soldier in the cause of Allah. Allah will never let him go waste and he will certainly accept our sacrifice.

After this we came back home. I could not understand the real purpose of that discussion and very soon I forgot all about that.

Some days later I saw in a dream that some people some people had bound me tightly and they were taking

me towards a raging and roaring river. It seemed that the river was in spate and its water overflowed its banks. Suddenly I heard someone saying that the river would calm down only if a human being was thrown into it as a sacrificial offering and pointing his finger towards me he said that by offering Bashir Ahmad to the raging waves of the river, we could be hopeful of our survival. In no time the people around there took hold of me and threw me into the roaring waves of the river. I fainted. When I regained consciousness, I found my self in the midst of an orchard full of luscious fruits and beautiful flowers. Its beauty was beyond description. Freshwater canals were flowing through the orchard and the incense of flowers was enchanting. I thanked God for saving me from the cruel waves of the raging river. Then I awoke from my sleep. The dream had a great effect on me and I think it served as a precursor to dedicating my life thereafter.

This dream had a great effect on my life and I think its interpretation is somehow related to the pledge of my '*Waqf*'. In the course of time I totally forgot about that and never heard of dedicating one's life from anyone.

In 1945 I got admission in the Taleem-ul Islam High School, Qadian. I was at that time 14 years old. The days spent in Qadian were very memorable and my faith strengthened during this period. It was a great pleasure and blessing to be in the company of the companions of the Promised Messiah ^{a.s} at every step. Daily after *Maghrib* prayer till *Isha* Majlis Irfan (question & answer session) with Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II was held in Masjid Mubarak. I was punctual in attending those sessions and never missed them. God's words and sayings of the Holy Prophet were all that resounded at these sessions and I derived great pleasure and benefited from them. This

changed the course of my life altogether. Listening to the sermons and speeches of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II and attending his meetings became a source of great delight for me.

During one of his Friday sermons Hadrat Khalifatul Masiah II urged the youth of Ahmadiyyat to dedicate their life for the *Jammat*. His urge was so forceful and effective that at the end of the Friday prayer many young men responded to the call given by the *Khalifa* and enlisted themselves under '*Waqfe-Zindagi*' (dedication of one's life). I was also one of those fortunate young men. A few days later I received a postcard confirming the acceptance of my pledge of *Waqf* by *Hudur*. He also prayed for my steadfastness.

At once I dispatched a letter to my father that I have dedicated my life without even consulting him or seeking his consent. My father responded with a passionate letter in which he wrote, "I had vowed before God at the time of your birth that I would dedicate this child for the cause of Allah. All through this period I silently prayed that Allah might cultivate such a desire in you that you should fulfill my vow on your own. I never asked you to do that because I did not want you to think that I had forced you to dedicate your life. So I prayed for you that you should on your own sweet will enter into the bond of *Waqf*. Today God has fulfilled my desire and I am groping for words to offer thankfulness to God."

The school closed for summer vacation and I went to my village. There I told my mother about *Waqf*. She said, "My son, I am illiterate. I do not know what *Waqf* is and what its requirements and conditions are. But I know that if you have done this to seek the pleasure of Allah, He

will never let you go to waste and certainly He will bless your endeavors. My prayers are with you.”

From the year 1945 to 1949 there was no talk about *Waqf*. After Matriculation I asked my father what I should do next. He suggested that I join college to further my studies. One day, I suddenly received a letter from the Private Secretary Sahib which said that *Hudur* had enquired about a Pathan student who had enrolled as a *Waqfe-e-Zindagi* but *Hudur* did not remember his name, and even there was no record about him in the office at Qadian. So they were trying to trace that student by writing letters to all the students who studied in Qadian in the year 1945. I wrote back to the Private Secretary Sahib that I was the student they were trying to find out. After a few days I received a letter saying that *Hudur* had urgently sent for me. I therefore immediately started for Rabwah to meet *Hudur*.

Hudur asked me to take admission in Taleem-ul Islam College Lahore to do my graduation. This is a long story and it would consume much time to describe what I gained from *Waqf*. My father was the only Ahmadi in his village. All our relatives were materialistic who, though verbally professed faith in Islam, knew nothing about faith and its requirements. Indulging in gambling & gossip was their usual practice. To tell them about *Waqf* and its requirements was like casting pearls before swine.

My uncles and other relatives who were of my age ridiculed me by saying that Basheer Ahmad in spite of belonging to a landlord family was going to become a *Mulla*. A *Mulla* was looked down upon in our village. Outwardly, the *Mulla* was respected, yet he was treated disgracefully. It was unbearable for me to hear the taunts and scathing remarks of my relatives. I avoided their

company but my father comforted and encouraged me and told me about the blessings of *Waqf* and advised me not to care a fig about the remarks of the ignorant people.

It was period of trial and test for me. My cousins often rallied me by saying that I had disgraced myself though I belonged to a respectable and landlord family. They would say: “You have property, you are educated, you belong to an influential family, you can easily get a good job, then why should you become a *Mulla*?”

But Allah guided me and made me steadfast. I didn’t change my decision. *Alhamdolillah*.

Today when over 50 years have passed since I dedicated my life, I reflect on my past, I am overwhelmed to see the countless blessings and bounties of Allah that he has showered on me during these years. I can’t find words to express my gratefulness to Allah. I got everything that my non-Ahmadi relatives could not even think of. Seeing my peaceful and better life some of my relatives confessed before me that had they accepted Ahmadiyyat they would also have been recipients of such blessings.

Among my relatives a few were bestowed good understanding and better insight by Allah. One of them was my uncle Mohammad Samin Jan Sahib who earned name and fame as a successful lawyer. He was also a reputed political leader and during the pre partition days he served as a minister in the Frontier Province under the Muslim League administration. One day he visited our village. He was very close to me. He called me and asked about my *Waqf*. I acquainted him with the institution of *Waqf* in detail. After listening to me with great attention he said;

“Basheer Ahmad, you have dedicated your life for a supreme cause. Allah will never let you go

waste. And once you have entered this door you must not retrace your steps. Don't care about the people of your village. They can't understand these things. You will be confronted by troubles and hardship, but you should fight them bravely upholding the traditions of the Pathan tribe. Allah will be with you."

May Allah accept my *Waqf* and grant me His pleasure for which I dedicated my life. Amen.

My Days In Taleem-ul-Islam College, Lahore.

After doing my matriculation I joined T.I College Lahore. This college was housed in the building of D.A.V College of pre-Partition days and was situated adjacent to the Govt. College, Lahore. Hadrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad Sahib was the principle of this college. We had migrated from Qadian so we had no personal belongings. The college was also started in a modest way. But through the prayers of Hadrat Khalifatul Massih II and the selfless dedication and hard work of our teachers the result of the college was 90% in the University Exam. *Alhamdulillah* (praise be to Allah). This made the college famous all over Pakistan overnight. The college established itself in the field of sports also. Our Rowing Team secured the first position for many successive years at the university level Sports Competitions.

Taleem-ul-Islam College launched its magazine '*Alminar*' in April 1950. It was a bilingual magazine published in Urdu & English. It soon gained popularity due to informative and excellent articles, its exquisite get-up and fine paper. '*Alminar*' surpassed all the other popular college magazines which had been published for many years.

I was fortunate for having been appointed as the sub-editor of the Urdu section of this magazine in the year of its inception. After two years I was made its editor. Many of my articles were also published in it. One of my articles on the life & poetry of Khushaal Khan Khatak was liked very much. This was the beginning of my literary career. After that I wrote many articles for *Alfazal* and other periodicals of the *Jamat* which were also published. *Alhamdolillah*.

In 1953 when I was busy preparing for my finals, anti-Ahmadiyya riots suddenly broke out in Pakistan. These riots started in Lahore. The *Ahraris* and other opponents of Ahmadiyyat even vowed to root out Ahmadiyyat – (God forbid).

Taleem-ul-Islam College was the main target of the rioters. Everyday the rioters gather in a procession around the college and raised anti-Ahmadiyya slogans and resorted to stone pelting. They even tried to enter the college and set fire to it, but their plans were thwarted. Under the astute leadership of Hadrat Mirza Nasir Ahamd Sahib, who was the principle, the college was transformed in to an impregnable fortress. I was also engaged in different duties along with other students. There were not questions of any studies during those days. It was a trying and testing time. The situation in Lahore turned very grim and tense. Many Ahmadis were martyred. Ahmadis houses were vandalized and looted and set afire. It seemed as if Pakistan turned into anarchy.

Apart from protecting the college building we were also assigned the task of giving protection to other Ahmadi brothers in Lahore. Janab Sheikh Basheer Ahmad Sahib, Advocate Lahore High Court was the *Amir Jamat* of Lahore. His house was also attacked and he was arrested. I

was deployed at his house many times. Those were troublesome days.

Finally the army controlled the riots. I could not sit for the exams as I had no preparations. So I took the supplementary exams in September that year. Yet I was not fully prepared, so there was little hope of success.

It struck my mind that I should write letter to Hadrat Khalifatul Massih II for prayer. Allah could grant me success even if I was not properly prepared for the exam. I drafted thirty letters, put them in envelopes and affixed stamps on them. I posted one letter daily. After a few days replies started reaching me which said that *Hudur* had prayed for me. This practice continued. One day I received a letter from *Hudur* which said:

“I receive a letter from you daily requesting me for prayer. I pray for your success. Inshallah you will certainly pass the exam. Rest assured and keep reminding me for prayer.”

Hudur’s words gave immense solace and confidence to me. But I was also worried because of my lack of preparation for the exam. I was very weak in English Literature and I was feeling hopeless about it.

One night when only four days were left for the beginning of exams I saw in a dream that a man handed me a question paper and said, “This is your English Literature paper. Learn it.” When I had read the paper I told him that the questions were very difficult and I didn’t know the answers. At this, the man said that that was why he was showing me the paper so that I should learn those questions. Then I woke up from my dream and noted down all the questions and again lay down. Next day I

forgot all about the dream. Suddenly my eyes fell on the paper in the evening and the dream flashed back in my mind. I showed those questions to my room-mate Mr. Aslam Sahib and narrated my dream to him. He said that these questions could never be set in the exam, as no practice paper contained them. But I thought that whether these questions would be set or not, there was no harm in memorizing their answers. After all, I had a dream so there must be a message in it for me. So I grasped those questions and memorized their answers to some extent.

When I went to write the English Literature paper I was extremely surprised to see the same questions that I had seen in my dream. I thanked my Lord and started answering them. By the grace of Allah I attempted all the questions. My friends to whom I had narrated my dream were greatly surprised at this miracle. They were very remorseful as they didn't believe my dream and could not answer the questions well. I too was amazed at this miracle and praised Allah for this abundant grace.

Now I was fully confident of my success, as I had two things on my side. One was *Hudur's* assurance letter and the other was my true dream. Both these things boosted my morale and I was content and confident. I left for my village after the exam and eagerly waited for the result.

When the result was declared I was shocked to learn that I had failed. I was greatly perturbed. I thought if I was destined to fail then why God had shown me the question paper in my dream and why *Hudur* had assured me of my success.

At times my faith began to shake and negative thoughts occupied my mind. I returned to my village from Peshawar after seeing my result in a newspaper. Extreme

sadness was written large on my face. My father asked about the result. I told him I had failed, he comforted me by saying that you could not prepare properly for the exam owing to anti-Ahmadiyya riots. He asked me not to worry at all and said, “*Inshallah*, you will pass in the following year.”

After a few days, my father told me that whenever he prayed for me at night, a voice told him that Basheer Ahmad had passed. At this I showed the college letter to my father which said that I had failed. My father kept mum over this. Four days later my father said that every night during prayers he heard a voice saying Basheer Ahmad had passed. He considered this to be a prediction for the next year. Days passed on. I made up my mind to rejoin the college. It so happened that one day I received fifteen letters by post.

I was immensely surprised to see them and wondered where they had come from. One of those letters was from my college. When I opened and read it, I stood stunned. It said that I was declared failed by a mistake by the University and after reevaluation of the answers sheets I had been declared passed. The rest of the letters were from my friends congratulating me on my success. When I told my father about it, he at once fell into prostration before God and said that he was being informed of my success daily but the University declared me failed by mistake. Allah, by His sheer grace, granted me success.

After a few days I went to Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II and narrated the whole episode. *Hudur* said that after prayers he was informed of my success and he passed the information to me. Who can alter a decision declared by Allah?

The days I spent in college were very beneficial and fruitful for me. I regard that period as faith-inspiring. The blessed companions of the Promised Massiah^{a.s} were invited to the college from time to time. They narrated, rather relived, the days of the Promised Messiah^{a.s} which strengthened and enhanced our faith. In college I found a loving and caring teacher in the person of Hadrat Moulana Arjumand Khan Sahib. He was a Pathan and had migrated from Afghanistan to Qadian during the days of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih I. He completed his Moulvi Fazil degree at Qadian and was appointed as teacher in Madarsa Ahmadiyya. He was appointed as teacher of *Deenyat* in the Taleem-ul-Islam College at Lahore. He was very humble, hospitable and had a cheerful deportment. He was especially kind to me. After college hours I spent much of my time with him. May Allah grant him a high station in paradise. Among other teachers who impressed me much were Prof. Ch. Ali Mohammad Sahib, Prof. Sufi Basharat Rahman Sahib, Prof. Naseer Ahmad Khan Sahib and Prof. Sultan Mahmood Sahib. May Allah reward all of them abundantly. Amen.

My class fellows at the college had the best opportunity to serve the *Jamat* and still they are doing it. Some of them are serving as *Amir Jamat* while some are serving in the Central Office at Rabwah on key posts, yet some other served in Civil services on high posts. All I want to say is that my college days formed the happiest period of my life.

I still become alive with zeal and zest when I recall the days I spent in Lahore. During my student life at college I engaged myself in literary activities as well. Being the President of the College Urdu Society, I regularly used to make contacts with the prominent and

famous writers and poets of Lahore and invited them to the meetings of College Urdu Society. Shaukat Thanvi, Waqar Azim, Dr. Taseer (an eminent poet) are a few to mention. I also had the opportunity to meet Jigar Muradabadi through the good offices of Shaukat Thanvi. I had also the honor to hold a number of meetings of 'Halqa-e-Arbab-e-Zauq' a well known literary society. Some of the famous literary figures were Saadat Hasan Manto, Khadija Mastoor, Hajira Masroor, Nadeem Qasmi and Zaheer Kashmiri.

I completed my graduation in 1953. The Annual Convocation of the college was held in 1954, during which we were awarded degrees by the then Foreign Minister Hadrat Chaudhary Sir Mohammad Zafarullah Khan Sahib. We had also photographs with him. I had seen Hadrat Chaudhary Sir Mohammad Zafarullah Khan Sahib from a distance several times in Qadian but for the first time I had the opportunity to be so close to him on the occasion of the college convocation. Later in my career as a *Muballigh* I immensely benefited from his august company which I shall discuss in the coming chapters.

Academic Period In Jamiatul Mubashireen Rabwah.

After completing my graduation in Lahore I came to Rabwah to meet Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II. *Hudur* asked me to join the *Jamia* Ahmadiyya to earn the *Shahid* degree. *Hudur* said he wished me to send in the field of *Tabligh*. So under the instructions of *Hudur* I reported to Hadrat Maulana Abul Ata Sahib who was the Principal of *Jamia* Ahmadiyya in those days. He asked me about my knowledge of Arabic. I told him that I had but little

understanding of Arabic as I had studied Persian at school and college level. As far as Arabic was concerned I only studied it as *Deenyat* (Holy Quran & other prayers). He said that students join *Jamia* Ahmadiyya after completing *Moulvi Fazil* and asked me how I would keep up with the other students. I said that I had come under the instructions of *Hudur*; otherwise I too knew well that I was incompetent of acquiring Arabic knowledge.

Anyway Hadrat Moulvi Sahib accepted me and promised to arrange special classes for me. I was to be the only student. He said that in two years he would impart such knowledge as to enable me to join *Darja Salsa* to continue my further studies along with the other students who had already passed *Moulvi Fazil*. So the special class started. I was the lone student, and the teachers who taught me were eminent scholars of *Jamat* – Hadrat Moulvi Abul Ata Sahib, Hadrat Malik Saifur Rehman Sahib, Hadrat Moulana Abul Munir Noorul Haq Sahib, Hadrat Moulana Mohammad Ahmad Jalil Sahib and Hadrat Moulana Ghulam Bari Saif Sahib. These august personalities taught me commentary of Holy Quran, *Hadith*, *Fiqua* (Jurisprudence), Christianity, the history of Islam, etc., and in two years I gained such knowledge as to be able to join the third year class of *Jamia*. It was a five year course.

The initial days of *Jamia* were very difficult for me. There was a world of difference between the atmosphere at college and *Jamia*. Gradually I became accustomed to it. In *Jamia* special attention was given to writing and declamatory skills. I was very fond of writing articles even as a college student and *Jamia* Ahmadiyya offered me a platform to hone my writing skill. Some of my articles were published in the *Alfazal*’ and *Al-Furqan* which were appreciated by Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II as well. *Hudur*

especially liked my articles entitled '*Jamat* Islami Pakistan' which was published piecemeal in *Alfazal*. *Hudur's* appreciation gave me much encouragement and I used to secure first or second position in the declamation contests held in college. The same spirit continued here also and I used to be among the best in the *Jamia's* speech contests

During my days at *Jamia* our class had the honor of being blessed by a personal visit from *Hudur* Khalifatul Massih II. *Hudur* advised us to specialize in various branches of knowledge. He specially instructed every student to make a library of his own and that every student should cultivate the habit of buying books. *Hudur* cited his own example and said that he used to spend half of the pocket money he received from Hadrat Masih Mauood *Alaihisslam* on buying newspapers and other periodicals and thus he was able to maintain his own library which he later dedicated to the *Jamat*. It was merged with the Khilafat Library. To encourage and motivate students for buying books *Hudur* instructed the administration cell of *Jamia* to forward a loan of Rs 100 to each student on easy installments basis. The students were expected to spend this amount on buying books to make their own libraries. The books published by *Jamat* were to be given at a discount of fifty percent to students. Thus, following the advice of *Hudur* I made my own library. I bought all the books of the *Jamat* that were available at that time and thus I was able to build a large library. The habit I acquired under the instruction of *Hudur* is still alive in me. Over the years due to transfers and changing of residence some books were lost, yet my love for books didn't die down. Reading books and serious study have always been my favorite pastimes.

History, especially the history of Islam is my favorite subject. Biography and travelogues come next. At one time, I was very fond of reading fiction, and I read Urdu and English fiction voraciously. Someone objected to my reading fiction so I sought the advice of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II in this regard. *Hudur* said he too read fiction but only English fiction. *Hudur* said he didn't like to read Urdu fiction as it was written in an exaggerated style and was based on falsehood. Then he advised me to read English fiction if at all I had to read fiction as English fiction was more close to truth than Urdu fiction, and it would improve my English also. During my school and college days my interest in fiction dissipated gradually and now I go nowhere near any fiction.

Urdu Prose and Poetry had been my favorite subjects and still I stick to them. I have collection of poetry of many great poets on my shelf.

I passed '*Shahid*' exam in 1957 and reported for duty in *Vakalat Tabshir* under the instructions of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II.

My Mentor & Teacher
Hadrat Moulana Abul Ata sahib Jalandhri
Khalid-e-Ahmadiyyat

A good teacher is one of the greatest blessings of God. If one finds a good teacher, one's life is filled with many blessings. Saints and prophets are also teachers who bring about a spiritual revolution in the world and leave behind them millions of such illustrious students as disseminate spiritual knowledge in the world.

I consider myself very fortunate in the sense that by the sheer grace of Allah I found such benign and able teachers as were able to leave an indelible impression on my mind through their profound erudition and scholarship. Hadrat Moulana Abul Ata Sahib of Jalandhar, upon whom was bestowed the title of *Khalid-e-Ahmadiyyat*, is one such teacher.

Even as a child I had heard much about Hadrat Moulana Sahib from my father who often told me about his convincing debates, astute polemics and scholarly speeches. I had also the opportunity to read his articles in the *Alfurqan*, but I had never had the chance to meet him personally. When I went to see Hadrat Khalifatul Massih II after passing my graduation, *Hudur* advised me to join *Jamia Ahmadiyya* and sent a note to Hadrat Moulana Abul Ata Sahib to admit me in the *Jamia*.

Hadrat Moulana Sahib was the Principle of *Jamia* at that time. The following day when I was preparing to go to *Jamia* to meet Moulana sahib, I felt very afraid. I was overawed by his profound knowledge, inspiring personality and noble character. I didn't have the courage

to face him as I felt myself a pigmy by his side in every aspect. Anyhow I went to his office and greeted him with *Asslamolaikum*. He stood up from the chair when he saw me. With a charming smile on his face he asked me to come in and sit on a chair. I obeyed him and told him that *Hudur* had sent me to you. He asked me about my knowledge of Arabic language. I told him that I had studied English and Persian up to graduation and I was totally ignorant of Arabic language; though I knew a little about the Urdu translation of the Holy Quran. Hadrat Moulvi Sahib very kindly comforted me by saying not to worry about that as he would teach me Arabic, but I had to show application and hard work. He said that as *Hudur* wanted me to complete the course of the *Jamia* Ahmadiyya; he would try his best to make me able enough to catch up with other students of the *Jamia*.

This was my first personal meeting and introduction with Hadrat Moulana Abul Ata Sahib. From that day there ensued a never-ending chain of love and affection between us. He arranged a special class in which I was the lone student. This class continued for two years until I was able to join Darja Salsa to pursue my studies with other students of *Jamia*.

The most distinctive feature of his noble qualities was his hospitality. Though I was his student yet I was fortunate to enjoy his hospitality on several occasions. It seemed as if he didn't like to eat his meals alone. Once I went to Rabwah from London for a week. Hadrat Moulana Sahib was not in Rabwah at that time, but he returned a day before my departure. Thus, I went to see him, and he asked me to come for dinner the next day. But I expressed my inability as I was invited elsewhere. He thus asked me to come for lunch. Again I said that I was already booked

for lunch. Then he asked me to come for breakfast to which I agreed. But the breakfast was not less than a full meal. Fried mutton and chicken, eggs, *Parathe*, Yoghurt, tea, *Kabab* and many other items were on the table.

He insisted on me eating every item; such was his hospitality. He never let me go without having tea whenever I went to his office. Once during summer when I went to him, he placed a bucketful of mangoes immersed in ice. He said somebody had sent those mangoes, so he invited me give him company.

When I was the Private Secretary, he came to me and advised that guests should be served tea or *sharbat* as they come from far off places. I replied that lack of budget didn't permit me to do so. He kept silent and went up stairs to meet *Hudur*. Soon he returned with a face glowing with pleasure. He said that he explained to *Hudur* that lack of funds was an impediment in serving the guests with refreshment. *Hudur*, Hadrat Khalifatul Massih III put his hand in the pocket and gave him a handful of currency notes and gave instructions that tea, *sharbat* and biscuits should be served daily. *Hudur* further said that whenever there was need of money, he should come to him take as much money as was needed. There was no need for any regular budget for this. Hadrat Moulvi Sahib gave me the money and I made arrangements for tea etc. on a regular basis. Hadrat Moulana Sahib continued to provide money for this purpose which he received from *Hudur*.

I was not the only one who enjoyed his hospitality. Hundreds rather thousands of persons had enjoyed such experience.

Hadrat Moulana Sahib was a deep ocean of knowledge and wished his students to become as such. I was particularly interested in writing articles even before I

joined the *Jamia* and I also served as the editor of *Alminar*. But I never got the chance to write scholarly articles. Hadrat Moulana Sahib encouraged me to write articles for his magazine *Al-Furqan*. When I submitted a couple of articles to him for publication, he advised me never to think whether they were fit for publication or not. It was his task to make them fit for publication. Thereafter my articles started to appear in the *Al-Furqan* and *Al-Fazal* which was made possible through the noble efforts of Hadrat Moulana Sahib. Even after I came over to London, he pressed me for sending articles for *Al-Furqan*. After some years he included my name in the editorial board of *Al-Furqan*. This was done just to encourage me. My name continued to appear on the front page in the editorial board for four or five years.

Hadrat Moulana Sahib was like a lighted lamp which kindles many other lamps.

He disliked giving his own example in any situation; he never narrated instances of the acceptance of his own prayers. Once I asked him if he had received any revelation. He shuddered and his face became hot. Then after a brief silence he said, "I don't like narrating my revelations, visions or dreams to anyone. But I also fear lest you should deny the truth and importance of these. So I give you some examples but you should keep them to yourself." He narrated many revelations and visions which saw their grand fulfillment. Once I asked him what *Lailatul Qadr* is and what its reality is and if any holy person had ever witnessed or experienced this night. During the explanation of my query he confessed that he himself had witnessed *Lailatul Qadr* (The Night of Destiny). He explained in detail about it which enhanced and strengthened my faith further.

He had a fine sense of humor. He was not like a so-called scholar bearing serious deportment but he enjoyed humor and light jokes and also narrated funny jokes. One special experience that I witnessed in his company was that as long as I remained in his company a sense of ecstasy permeated through my body which lingered for long even after leaving his company. Once while teaching in his class he revealed that he liked those students who established a deep and informal personal relationship with him. He used to tell that they had a close relationship with their teacher Hadrat Moulvi Roshan Ali Sahib. They didn't even hesitate to ask him for some loan and he willingly gave them loan without making any queries.

After three or four days I went to him and asked for a loan of ten rupees. He gave me the amount and asked me why I needed it. I said Hadrat Hafiz Roshan Ali Sahib never asked you such questions. At this he burst into laughter and said, "You have come to test me." I returned the money but he refused to take it and asked me to keep it as pocket money. I am unable to recount all his qualities. He had a very attractive and beautiful look, good height and stature. He was very particular about putting on neat and clean dress. He gave special attention towards the neatness not only of his own dress but also kept a sharp eye on the clothes of his students. If he ever spotted a student in dirty uniform he would advise him, "Cleanliness is half of faith". I never saw him wearing dirty or wrinkled clothes.

He was very careful about our *Tarbiyat* (moral training). He saw to it that we offered our five daily prayers behind Hadrat Khalifatul Masih in *Masjid Mubarak*. He also ensured that every student attended the question and answer session conducted by *Hudur*. If a

student missed these sessions he would call him and tell the significance and blessings of these sessions.

Question & Answer sessions used to be held after Asr Prayer in Rabwah with Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II. During one such session *Hudur* asked me to deliver a speech in Arabic. I began to have pins and needles. How can I make a speech in Arabic? When the session was over, Hadrat Moulana Sahib called me and anticipating my fear and worry he smiled and said, "Don't be afraid. Come to me." He wrote a speech for me and asked me to learn it and then read it out before him the next day. He asked me not to worry at all as I would learn Arabic in that way only. Then he narrated his own incident. He was young and still a student of Madarsa Ahmadiyya when he was sent to enter into a debate with Pastor Abdul Haque. By the grace of Allah he was victorious. He used to say that prayer was the key to all kinds of success. A student or *Muballigh* who does not engage himself in prayers can never taste the fruit of success.

He felt very happy to see his students working in the field of Tabligh. Hadhrat Moulvi Sahib was beside himself with joy when he learnt that I had been invited to Liberia by the President himself. He insisted that I should send him my photographs with the President of Liberia so that he could publish them in *Al-Furqan*. So I sent him some photographs which were published in *Al-Furqan* on the front page. He also wrote me a letter of appreciation.

I illustrate an instance of his deep devotion and attachment to the *Jamat* and his immediate response to the call of the Khalifa of the time. When Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II launched the scheme of *Waqfe-Jadid*, Hadhrat Moulvi Sahib dedicated both his sons to the service of the *Jamat*. Allah accepted his offer and rewarded him

abundantly as one of his sons served as *Mubaligh* in Liberia for a long time while the other served as Imam of the London Mosque. Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IV^{ra} conferred the title of 'Conqueror of Tuvalu' upon the son in law of Hadrat Moulvi Sahib. His second son-in-law became the Sadr Majlis Ansarulah U.K by the grace of Allah. Thus Allah fulfilled Hadrat Moulvi Sahib's wish that all his children should become dedicated servants of *Jamat*.

The story of sacrifices and blessings is too long to narrate here. So I close this chapter here. I pray that Allah may raise his station in heaven and bestow His choicest blessings upon his family. Amen.

How I Gave Up My Habit of Smoking

It was the year 1945 when I was a student of 8th class; I spend most of my time reading my books. I was not interested in sports even as a child. One day a friend of mine suggested that we should go the open air in the fields. I agreed to his proposal and after the school was closed both of us went into the open fields on the outskirts of the town. The greenery and vegetation of the fields and the verdant crops gave us a feeling of aesthetic pleasure. Suddenly my friend produced a packet of cigarettes from his pocket and began to enumerate the benefits of smoking to me. He cited the example of Sir Winston Churchill in support of his claim. He said even Churchill who is a great statesman and leader is addicted to smoking. Had smoking been harmful such a great man as Churchill would not have indulged in this habit.

I listened to his words but they had no effect on me. Then all was forgotten. We met again after a few days. This time he invited me to a picnic on the outskirts of the

village which I accepted. We took food and other eatables and started for the fields where the lush green crops, dense trees and running water presented a picturesque scene. When we finished our meals, my friends took out a cigarette from the packet, put it between his lips and struck a matchstick. Then he took a deep puff of the cigarette and again gave a lecture on the benefits of smoking. Until then I didn't understand the meaning of the following Persian couplet:

*"If you keep company with the pious, you will
become pious and if you keep company with the
impious you will also turn impious."*

We can summarize this as: A man is known by the company he keeps.

Now today its meaning is impressed upon my heart.

I gradually came under the influence of that enemy under-the-garb of a friend. After a discussion of few minutes I consented to taking a puff of the cigarette. I thought if it wasn't to my taste I would never touch it again. At my friend's strong persuasion I put a cigarette between my lips and took a deep puff. No sooner did I take the puff then my eyes bulged out. I had a severe bout of cough and I began to feel giddy. Weakness overpowered me and I felt as the earth and the sky turned upside down. I threw away the cigarette and lay on the ground and began to reprove myself for having fallen into the trap of my so called friend.

After a long time I began to feel better. I drank water and left for my town. But my enemy under the garb of a friend was not the one who would give up easily. He told me that beginners felt a bit uneasy at the first attempt but after a couple of attempts one begins to enjoy smoking.

I reprimanded my friend and criticized the habit of smoking.

One day our friend decided to go on a picnic on the outskirts of the village in the open fields. We made heavy preparations – cooked food, bought a basket full of fruits and the company of friends proceeded towards the fields with great enthusiasm. This time we decided to camp near a river. As we reached there every one of us took up their allotted jobs. One lighted the fire, another set the cooking pot on it and yet another spread cloth sheets while another laid plates and dishes. After swimming and indulging in sports we all sat down to gulp down the food. After meals, everyone cracked jokes. We also recited couplets. While light banter was in full swing that enemy under the garb of a friend took out a packet of cigarettes and gave one cigarette to each of us. I was surprised to find that except for me all were smokers. Everyone started smoking and called me an orthodox and said that I could not make any progress in my life as I could not even smoke a cigarette.

All my friends ridiculed me and finally my patience gave up and my will power yielded to their strong ridicule. I too took a cigarette and lighted it and began to smoke deeply. I felt ill-at-ease and also suffered nausea yet I comforted myself for fear of being ridiculed by my friends and continued smoking the cigarette. This first cigarette that I smoked formed the basis for my fourteen years habit of smoking. This harmful and fatal habit of smoking was so strong that I could not get rid of it despite great efforts. Gradually the number of cigarettes I smoked in a day rose to sixty. The expenses on the cigarette exceeded my pocket expenses of my student life. I asked my father to supplement my over expenses and for that I used to make

several false excuses and demand money on one pretext or the other.

The habit I developed in 1945 lingered on till 1958 and played havoc with my soul and body. In 1953 when martial law was imposed in Pakistan, we were confined to the college compound. Curfew was relaxed for an hour or two and the students headed for market to buy essential commodities but I went to the market to buy as many packets of cigarettes as possible for fear of a shortage of cigarettes.

Time rolled on and my habit of smoking became stronger with the passage of time.

In 1958 I was a student of Jamiatul Mubashireen. One day the Private Secretary informed me that Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II had called me. I knew very well that *Hudur* had a strong scent so before going to meet *Hudur* I washed my fingers with soap and spirit as they had turned pale due to excessive exposure to nicotine, I put on neat and clean clothes and applied perfume, and made myself sure that there was no chance of *Hudur* detecting the smell of tobacco either from my body or clothes. Then I started towards *Hudur's* office. In those days *Hudur* graced his visitors in his office on the first floor. I climbed up the stairs and went into *Hudur's* office. *Hudur* gave me some instructions, and asked about my well being and studies at *Jamia*. The meeting being over, I shook hands with *Hudur*, and as I stood up to leave his office, he asked me to sit down. I obeyed *Hudur*. Suddenly he asked me how many cigarettes I smoked in a day. I felt the ground slipping under my feet when *Hudur* posed this question to me. I shuddered with fear. That the secret which I enshrined in my heart with great effort could come out so easily was beyond my imagination. I replied:

“*Hudur*, I smoke too much”. *Hudur* asked, “Anyway how many cigarettes do you smoke in a day?”

I replied that I smoked about sixty. *Hudur* was stunned to hear this and repeated my words: “you smoke sixty cigarettes in a day!” I hung my head in absolute shame and kept silent. *Hudur* said, “You are a graduate. You might have certainly found some benefits in smoking. Acquaint me with its benefits so that I may add them to my knowledge.”

Hanging down my head in shame I humbly said “There is absolutely no benefit in this and it is a wasteful habit.”

Then *Hudur* said,

“Why, then, do you indulge in such a wasteful and useless habit despite being an educated person?”

“Recently I read an article in the Reader’s Digest” he continued, “which said that a European expedition of mountaineers went to scale Mount Everest. One of the mountaineers fell short of his stock of cigarettes and as he could not bear this shock, he lost his breath. Isn’t it strange that a person who succeeded in going as far as scaling Mount Everest should lose the battle of life just because of want of a cigarette.”

Hudur continued:

“Cigarette smoking is fatal for life, detrimental to health and one is always vulnerable to cancer. It also weakens a person financially and leads him to disaster. If a person spends one tenth of the money he wastes on cigarette smoking on buying healthy and nutritious food, then he will

not only be able to get rid of frivolous expenses on cigarettes, but he will be blessed with good health.”

After this *Hudur* asked if I was serious about giving up this habit. I replied in the affirmative and said that I was not only ready to give up this habit but also ready to do any sacrifice for it. I said that despite my efforts I could not succeed in discarding this habit.

“I will tell you the method, but to put it into practice is your responsibility” Huzur said. “If you follow my method with sincerity, support your resolve with prayers, *Inshallah* you will get deliverance from this habit. I too will pray for you.”

“Generally it has been noted that smokers, before making a resolve to get rid of smoking, first finish off the packet present in their pocket and then take a vow not to smoke any more, or they decrease the numbers of cigarettes they smoke a day. Thus they think they can get rid of this habit for ever. But they never succeed in that. So my first piece of advice to you is that you should crush the cigarette packet under your feet that you have hidden somewhere.

My second piece of advice is that for forty days you should not go to the shop from where you buy cigarettes (In those days there was only one shop in Rabwah that sold cigarettes) If that shop falls in your way, change your route.

My third piece of advice to you is that you should shun the company of such friends as smoke with you. Avoid them for forty consecutive days. Tell them that Khalifatul Masih has forbidden me to meet you. If it is really necessary

to meet such friends you should tell them strictly not to smoke in your presence. My fourth piece of advice is that generally a smoker feels a strong urge to smoke just after meals. So keep roasted grams in your pocket and whenever you feel like smoking, enjoy chewing roasted grams. In this way your urge to smoke will gradually die down.”

Hudur concluded his advice with this:

“Follow my instructions for forty consecutive days and then report to me”

I promised *Hudur* that I would earnestly follow his instructions and come back.

The initial days were very hard for me. I felt uneasy all the time. I lost interest in everything. Then gradually I regained composure. I began to enjoy eating food once more as cigarette smoking slowly left me.

The bad taste characteristic of smoking also vanished from my tongue. After the completion of forty days I went to *Hudur*. *Hudur* asked me what the situation was then. I humbly replied, “*Alhamdulillah*, I have been able to get deliverance from the habit of smoking.” *Hudur* recited *Alhamdulillah* several times in a loud voice and expressed his pleasure over it. This was a great favour showered on me by *Hudur*.



Chapter – III

My Appointment in the U.K & A Memorable Journey.

Having obtained my *Shahid* degree from the *Jamiatul Mubashreen* I went to *Vakalat Tabsheer*. At that time Hadrat Shibzada Mirza Mubarak Ahmad Sahib was the *Vakilul Tabsheer* and Janab Basharat Ahmad Sahib and Janab Hasan Mahmood Khan Sahib Arif, were his deputies. The *Vakalat Tabsheer* sought advice from Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II regarding any appointment. *Hudur* sent a reply that he (Basheer Ahmad Rafiq) be sent to England. Preparations were afoot to send me to England.

Only three years had passed since my marriage and I had a son, Munir Ahmad. It was my father's wish that my family should also go to U.K with me. But in those days *Muballighs* were not allowed to take their families with them. Some of the *Muballighs* had been serving abroad for several years separated from their families. Even the financial conditions of the *Jamat* in those days could not bear the expenses of families of *Muballighs*. So there was no question of sending the family of a *Muballighs* who was going abroad for the very first time. I explained the whole situation to my father. He said even then there was no harm in asking for such permission, and he would pray for that as he had firm belief that Allah would accept his prayers. He told me to write to *Hudur* for permission and advised me to be hopeful of a favorable

decision through prayers. So I did as I was told and the result was what I feared for. *Hudur* returned my application with the remarks:

“The *Jamat* can not bear the expenses of your family.”

I informed the same to my father. My father asked me to write to *Hudur* again that if *Hudur* granted me permission to take my family U.K, I would bear all the expenses and would not be a burden upon the *Jamat*. *Hudur* granted my request and said,

“Apart from the expenses of the journey you will also be responsible for all the other expenses of your family & children.”

By the first week of January 1959 all arrangements had been completed to send me to England. So the Vakalat Tabsheer gave me marching orders. A day before leaving Rabwah, Hadrat Mirza Mubarak Ahmad Sahib Wakil-ul-Tabsheer took me to *Hudur*. *Hudur* gave me detailed instructions, blessed me with prayers and embraced me before leaving. *Alhamdolillah*.

We had to board the vessel named Caledonia, a first class ship of Anchor Line, from the Karachi Port. The departure time was in the afternoon on 23rd January 1959 which was a Friday. After Friday prayers I, along with my wife and son, reached Karachi Port. Besides other friends and well wishers, Mr. Saeed Ahmad Khan and Dr. Basharat Ahmad also came to see off me. Janab Khalilul Rahman (late) secretary Ziafat (hospitality) offered long silent prayers and then we boarded the vessel.

We had a separate cabin bearing No. B-10. It was a very comfortable cabin with two beds and a cradle for the baby. Provision for cold and hot water was also there. Our

cabin faced the sea and we could see the sea from the windows all the time.

We put our luggage in the cupboard of the cabin and came on to deck. The friends who had come to see us off were standing on the shore and they remained there until the vessel went out of their sight.

In the evening at 6:30 the vessel announced its departure. The ship slowly made its way into the open sea. This sight was very moving and emotional and brought tears in the eyes of those who came to see us off. Some passengers were crying loudly, their voices choked with emotion. I, too, had become very emotional. I passed through a whole spectrum of emotions. I was thinking about whether I was competent enough to fulfill the requirements of *Waqf* even though I had dedicated my life for the service of Islam. I wondered whether or not I would be able to sacrifice my emotions, feelings, desires, passions, honor, wealth and life and everything else that I possessed. Whether or not I would be able to succeed in making my entire life subordinate to the will of God? On one hand I was conscious of the great responsibility I had been entrusted with as a *Muballigh* of Islam. Yet on the other hand I shuddered at the thought that I was ill-equipped with the requisite knowledge and resources, and my lack of ability and spiritual shortcomings added to my fears. I was passing through a strange type of experience. These thoughts made me emotional and streams of tears started rolling. With a voice choked with emotion I raised my hands in prayer and said:

“O My Lord! Without your grace and mercy, without your help and succor it is difficult, rather impossible, for me to discharge this cumbersome responsibility. Given that You have

chosen this good-for-nothing yet humble servant for this great task, You are the only Who can help me. Please keep me under Your benign care and hide my faults and cover up my sins and help me with the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

I finished with my prayers and looked around. There was water all around. The shore was no longer visible. The air had become humid so we retired to our cabin. My wife Saleema Begum was also too emotional to speak about anything. This was our first journey beyond the seas. Parents of both of us were still alive and they bade us a tearful farewell. We both became nostalgic about them and recalling their company we began to warm our hearts.

In those days people who went abroad beyond seas wouldn't return soon and most often they would decide to settle in Europe permanently. So it was but natural that the relatives of those embarking on a journey to Europe would become inconsolable and break into tears. I began to think of my mother who proved weak of heart and swooned soon after I left Rabwah. Then I recalled the last advice of my father which he gave me at the Railway Station in Faislabad. Before the departure of train he said in a tearful voice:

“You have dedicated your life on your own. No one has forced you to do so. Once you have made tryst with Allah you shall keep it and at any stage in your life, owing to severe hardship or adverse circumstances, turning away from your vow would bring your spiritual disaster and would also be against *Pakhtoon* traditions. Therefore remember if, God forbid, you back track from the pledge of *Waqf*, that would be the termination of

relations between you and me and you should never turn your face towards me as you would be like a dead son for me. Secondly if ever I come to know that your wife has discarded *Purda* under the influence of western culture, I will have no relationship with both of you.”

We rested for some time in the cabin until it was announced that passengers should proceed to the dining room for dinner. I saw that there was no separate arrangement for ladies there. Of the entire ship, only my wife observed *Purda*. Most of the ladies were either European or such Asian as had discarded ‘*Purda*’ considering it as an orthodox tradition. I, too, sat at a table and asked the Steward to send dinner into the cabin for my wife as she wears a veil and would not sit here among gents. The Steward replied that it was not permitted to take meals out of the dining room. In any case, he would talk to the captain. After sometime, he said that the captain wanted to see me. The captain was sitting at a separate table among his friends. I also sat beside him. The conversation that took place between us was like this:

“You have refused to bring your wife to the dining room as she is a *Purda* observing lady, and she cannot mingle with other people. You are going to Europe. How will you make your wife observe *Purda* there?”“Sir” I said, “I am going to Europe with the aim of acquainting the people there with the high and exalted status of women. *Purda* guards the honor and piety of a woman. For the achievement of this, I have embarked upon this journey. Would it thus be proper for me to throw my aim to the four winds at the first encounter? “To me it

seems an act of parochialism or narrow-mindedness to keep women under *Purdah*. If she were given freedom, she would never submit herself to the confines of *Purdah*.”“Sir” I replied, “my wife is a well educated lady. She has agreed to observe *Purdah* out of her own will and without any reservations. You may talk to her within *Purdah* limits about her view regarding *Purdah*. Then you will know the truth.” “OK, if you insist” he said, “but wouldn’t it be proper if a separate table is laid for both of you and nobody is allowed to sit around you.”“Mr. Captain that would be very comfortable and I shall be very grateful to you for this.”

The captain gave orders for a separate table to be laid for us. Thus by Allah’s grace our problem was solved.

On the 27th Jan at 8:00 a.m in the morning, the shores of Aden were in sight. Almost all the passengers of the vessel gathered on the deck. Seeing the land after 4 days journey through the waters was a delightful and comforting sight. The ship laid its anchor at the port of Aden at about 11 am. At the port of Aden the ships stop at a distance from the shore. The passengers are then carried on boats to the main shore. The captain announced that the passengers might go for sight seeing in Aden but they would have to return the ship by 7 pm which was the departure time of the vessel.

Aden has a long association with the history of the *Jamat*. The history is that when Maharaja Daleep Singh was returning to India from England, he was called back from the city of Aden. I will here give a brief account of this incident. The British annexed Punjab by defeating the

Sikh regime. Maharaja Daleep Singh, a young prince then, was sent to England lest the Sikh people should raise voice against the British. Thus they put an end to the Sikh leadership.

The young prince was kept in Guildford and then shifted to London. The beautiful hotel Cannizaro in London remained in possession of Maharaja Daleep Singh. The Maharaja and the Queen Victoria enjoyed cordial relations. Once the Maharaja requested the Queen to show him the Kohinoor diamond. The Queen up went to her room and brought the diamond. The Maharaja put the diamond on his palm and went towards the balcony to see it in the light. The Queen feared lest the Maharaja should drop the diamond. But the Maharaja, who had a great insight, anticipated the Queen's fear and immediately came back to her and said:

“Madam! The rightful owner of this diamond would like to present it to you.”

The Queen took back the diamond and appreciated the sense of humor of the Maharaja. The Maharaja expressed his intense desire to return to Punjab once and he requested the British Govt. many times to grant him permission for it. At last the Govt. granted him permission. When the Maharaja embarked on the ship for his journey to India, newspapers in India extensively published this news and the people of India eagerly and enthusiastically wanted to accord him a grand welcome on his return. Arrangements for special ceremonies were being made all over Punjab to greet the Maharaja. There was an atmosphere of delight and excitement everywhere. But Allah revealed to the Promised Messiah ^{a.s} that the Maharaja wouldn't be able to return to India. *Hudur* told about this not only to his friend but also mentioned it in

one of his leaflets. As soon as the vessel carrying the Maharaja touched the shores of Aden, the British Govt. gave orders to bring the Maharaja back to England. The Govt. feared that if once the Maharaja returned to Punjab, the movement to crown him as the King of Punjab would gain momentum which would pose a threat to British rule. So the word of God was fulfilled and the Maharaja could not return to Punjab.

Before leaving Rabwah I had informed Janab Abdullah Shabooti through my friend Muhammad Sabooti, who was his father. Janab Abdullah Shabooti was a very sincere and devout Ahmadi of Aden. He had to confront severe hardships and difficulties after he accepted Ahmadiyyat but he remained firm and steadfast. When the ship laid her anchor, he came into the ship to welcome and invite me for sight-seeing in Aden. In the evening he invited me to the reception arranged for me by the *Jamat* of Aden. So we went to shop of Dr. Mohammad Ahmad Adani in a motor car. Dr. Sahib was a devout Ahmadi of Indian descent and two of his sons had been my class fellows in Qadian. We exchanged ideas and views on different topics till the lunch was over. After Zuhr prayers we went for sight-seeing in Aden along with other members. The party cruised along in two or three cars. The city of Aden is an example of modern architecture. Double land roads and high buildings present a very picturesque view.

We returned to the ship towards the evening. Janab Abdullah Sahib's devotion, sincerity and his attachment to Khilafat left an indelible impression on my heart.

The ship slowly sailed its way towards our destination and once again the supremacy of water took over the ship. On the morning of 31st January the vessel

entered the Suez Canal. The city of Suez is adjacent to its shore. Small villages are inhabited on either side of the canal, and the people are mostly farmers. Most of the passengers had come out on the deck to feast their eyes on the beautiful scenery of the canal and its shores. At 11 a.m the ship entered the Great Bitter Lake. There were about 15 to 20 ships standing in the lake. There are about three to four big large lakes of their kind in this canal, where ships coming from both sides stop to facilitate the smooth running of traffic and also for the undisturbed sailing of the ships. Our ship also halted there till 5 p.m. The ship cannot sail at a pace more than 55 miles per hour in the canal. The Egyptian pilots take control of the ships when they enter the canal. Large vessels had to pay 3000 \$ to pass through this canal which is 118 ft wide, 30 ft deep and 101 miles long. The canal starts from Suez and ends at Port Saeed. It joins the Red and Mediterranean seas.

The vessel called at Port Saeed at 11 p.m and she laid her anchor. After breakfast in the morning it was announced that those wanting to see the city of Port Saeed could go. The announcement also cautioned the passengers against pickpockets and rogues. I was pained to hear that a Muslim country had such a bad reputation. We hired a motor car for 10 shillings which showed us round the city. We also visited the grand and beautiful mosque built by Abdul Rahman, a famous chief. The decoration of the mosque, the exquisite carpets made in Turkey and the lamps brought from the city of Venice were a treat to watch. The markets and bazaars of Port Saeed lacked honesty and truthfulness. The tourists are charged ten times the original value of an article which was indeed very deplorable and shameful.

On February 3, at 4 or 5 a.m the ship sailed for its next destination, Gibraltar, but during the voyage the ship received orders from the British Govt. that it should take some British soldiers stranded at Cypress. So the vessel changed its route and after a day's journey, she called at Port Lima sol in Qabras.

Here I saw a number of people coming towards the ship in their boats and they began to sell wine at very cheap rates. The European passengers made a beeline to buy the wine, which was selling like hot cakes. On enquiring I learnt that the wine was produced here and therefore sold at a very low price. Some passengers got wine in exchange for a pack of cigarettes. We were not allowed to disembark at Lima sol, yet we enjoyed its beauty from the deck of the ship. Hills covered in greenery offered a pleasant view. On 7th February the ship called at the port of Gibraltar.

Gibraltar was city directly attached to my emotions. When I was a student of 10th class I developed a passion to read novels related to the history of Andulus (Spain) and I read extensively on this topic which created a passionate love for Spain in my heart. Gibraltar was the starting point for the victory of Muslims in Spain. I began to walk the streets of Gibraltar in my imagination. Now when the Gibraltar was before me in reality I found it hard to contain my emotions. Gibraltar actually is a distorted form of *Jabal-ul-Tarique*. It is the name of a hill which overlooks Spain.

General Tarique Bin Ziyad saw the first sight of Spain standing on this hill. He ordered that his fleet be burnt down so that no option of return was available. They would either conquer Spain or lay down their lives. I was

also recalling the couplets of Iqbal which describe the speech of Tarique in verse.

When our ship laid its anchor in Gibraltar, I offered long prayers for General Tarique and begged Allah to restore the pristine glory of Islam in this country through the humble servants of the Messiah of this age.

The passengers were allowed to visit the city as the vessel had to halt there the whole day. We also disembarked and went to the spot standing from where General Tarique explored the possibility of conquering Spain. We offered silent prayers there. An epitaph has been installed there to indicate the exact spot where General Tarique stood.

The hills of Gibraltar are infested with monkeys which are being taken care of by the British Government. The reason behind this is that it is assumed that the day these monkeys bid adieu to this hill would sound the death-knell for the British regime in Gibraltar. Strange it seems that the English nation which has achieved amazing success in the field of science still cherishes such superstitious ideas.

On the dawn of 18th Feb. 1959 our vessel called at Liverpool Port, which marked the termination of our voyage. Dense and thick fog made it impossible for us to come out of the ship till 11a.m. When the fog cleared we came to the shore where a train was ready to take us to London. This was our first experience of travel in a British train. The cleanliness of the train was remarkable. There could be no comparison between the trains of our country and that of England. I wish our country would learn a lesson from it. It took us six hours to reach London from Liverpool. The entire England looked as if engulfed in a cloak of snow. There was nothing but snow as far as our

sight went. It seems as though nature has donned a thick white blanket. Inside the train it was, however, warm.

As Liverpool is a port, it is a busy city. As far back as 1890 an English man embraced Islam in this city and he assumed the name of Abdullah. His English surname was Cullim and therefore he was known by the name – Abdulla Cullim. He started an Islamic magazine which proved very fruitful in bringing 15 English people, both men and women, into the fold of Islam.

The Promised Messiah ^{a.s} has also mentioned his name in his writings and *Malfoozat*. His mission came to an end with his death and now nobody knows about him.

We reached Houston Euston station at six in the evening. I was surprised to note that nobody checked our passport when we alighted from the train. An officer was sitting on a chair and the passengers would display their passports holding them in their hands and passed out. No entry stamp was put on passports. Happy were those days when there was no bothering about passport or visa.

As we got down from the train we saw Janab Maulood Ahmad Khan Sahib, Imam of the London mosque, Dr Sultan Mahmood *Shahid* Sahib, Janab Abdul Aziz Sahib, Moulvi Abdul Rahman Sahib and Chaudhary Muhammad Ashraf Sahib standing on the platform to receive us. We drove straight to the Mission house from the station. The building of the mission house (now dismantled) was at 63 Melrose Road. It was a three storied building which housed the residence of Imam Sahib and its ground floor was being used as Mission house. There was another building at 61 Melrose Road, which was also owned by the *Jamat*. In 1955 when Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II visited England, he stayed in this building. I was accommodated in a flat of two rooms in the fourth storey

of this building. Thus my memorable journey to England came to an end.

My Initial Days In London

To me, London seemed to be a city of lights. I had never seen such a big city in my life before. We were staying in flat situated at 61 Melrose Road. The night was extremely cold. People generally either used grates in which they burnt coal or used oil heaters to warm the room. The flat which we occupied had neither of these facilities. Although we had brought our quilts from Pakistan yet they could not ward off cold. We didn't have a sleep of even forty winks at night. We went to Imam sahib after the breakfast. He asked us how we spent the night. I told him I had never experienced such severe cold in my life. In the afternoon Moulvi Abdul Rahman Sahib brought us an oil heater and also explained how to use it. When it was lighted the room began to warm and we gave a sigh of relief. I can never forget this favor of Moulvi Abdul Rahman Sahib. May Allah grant him a high status in paradise. Ameen.

After a few days Imam Sahib handed me a list of about 200 persons, comprised mostly of students, and told me that most of them might have returned to their native places. He asked me to contact those people and note down their correct addresses so that we could contact them easily and collect *Chandas*. I managed to trace about 149 of them after a hectic struggle of couple of days. This means that in 1959 the census of *Jamat Ahmadiyya* in England was not more than 149, which was comprised mostly of young men. Those having families were very rare. Nobody in the *Jamat* except Moulvi Abdul Rahman

Sahib, Chaudhary Mohammad Ashraf sahib and Moulvi Abdul Karim Sahib owned a motor car. All three of them freely lent their cars to the *Jamat*. May Allah raise the station of all these three pious people in heaven. Amen. Whenever they were called for any work by the *Jamat*, they immediately made themselves available without fail, and of course with their cars. They also paid for the petrol from their own pockets.

Moulvi Abdul Rahman Sahib was first sent to England in 1948 as a Muballigh. He was expected to fend for himself through his own business. Later he sought delivered from *Waqf* and settled in London permanently. He was extremely sincere, highly devout, amazingly selfless, and had a great passion for sacrifice for the *Jamat*. He changed his trades according to the season. I don't remember that he ever refused to do any work for the *Jamat*. Whenever he was called for, he immediately wound up his business and reached the Mission house.

Chaudhary Mohammad Ashraf Sahib had been residing in England for a long time. He was very devout, a true servant of Islam and very hospitable. He would insist that his friends share meals with him at home. He served his guests lavishly. His wife later became the President of *Lajna Imaillah* England. She too was very hospitable to the guests. Apart from serving guests at home, both would bring different kinds of sweets and other eatables to the Mission House to be served to the participants of different meetings and assemblies. Ahmadi brethren would use his motor car so often that it used to be called the free taxi of mission house. Even on insistence he never accepted to take money for petrol to be used in the car. I had the opportunity to travel with him for 100 miles out of London. Very eagerly and cheerfully he would take me

along and never let me pay for petrol even If I insisted strongly. May Allah grant him His pleasure and nearness. Amen.

Moulvi Abdul Karim Sahib was a *Waqfe zindagi* (one who has dedicated his life for *Jamat*). He served in Africa for a long time. Later he sought to be relieved from *Waqf* on personal grounds and settled in London. Apart from doing daily wages he would work in the Mission House. He would immediately come whenever he was called for. His car was also dedicated for the Mission House. He had the honor to serve the *Jamat* in various capacities. May Allah deal with him mercifully and graciously and also elevate his station in heaven. Amen.

Janab Syed Iqbal Shah Sahib settled in London after he migrated from east Africa. He resembled an angel in character. He would come to the Mission House daily and look after the financial matters of the mosque. He was an embodiment of high character, righteousness, kindness and uprightness. He was a down-to-earth and unassuming person and also a very God-fearing person. He served the *Jamat* with great devotion and sincerity till his last breath. May Allah recompense his service with even better and richer rewards. Amen.

His two sons, one Dr. Wali Ahmad Shah and the other Mansoor Ahmad Shah are also treading in the footsteps of their noble father. Their spiritual progress produces an exhilarating spirit in my heart and at the same time it also brings back the old and fond memories of their father to my mind.

Another noble person of East Africa was Chaudhary Abdul Rehman Sahib who was commonly known as A R Chaudhary. He was a teacher in Uganda. When he moved to England he bought a house near the

Mission House. He got a job in a school as a teacher here and after school hours he would engage himself in the service of *Jamat*. I started a magazine called Muslim Herald in 1960 and I appointed Chaudhary Sahib as its joint editor. Later he became the General Secretary of the *Jamat* and till the end of his life he remained dedicated to the *Jamat*. He never cared for time or his personal needs. He was a true servant of Islam in the real sense. I looked upon him as my true brother and he, too, reciprocated positively. His wife Mrs. Tahira Chaudhary, who had also been associated with the job of teaching, played a prominent role in serving the *Lajna Imaillah* of England.

May Allah grant acceptance to the noble services of both of them and reward them abundantly. Amen.

Another noble person of East Africa was Mohamad Akram Khan Ghouri. He came to England and settled near Mission House and dedicated himself for the service of *Jamat*. Daily he would visit the Mission House and engage himself in doing different jobs for the *Jamat*. He would perform each and every task cheerfully and with a sense of responsibility. May Allah also bestow upon him His choicest blessings and award him a high station in heaven.

Some of the devout and pious people who had been my colleagues in performing services for the *Jamat* are still alive by the grace of Allah. I won't write about them here. May Allah grant them a long and healthy life and rain His grace upon them.

Janab Abdul Raheem Sahib was another great man who I knew well. He was from Mauritius. He spoke very little and was reserved by nature yet he was a debonair and hospitable to guests and was very keen to serve them. He took active part in the services of Mission House. He remained a bachelor for a long time which offered him a

chance to become an excellent cook. He used to cook food on the occasion of Id and other feasts arranged at Mission House.

Mr Basheer Ahmad Bajwa and Mr. Dawood Ahmad Gulzar (both have passed away) were also among my close and honest friends of that time. May Allah shower His blessings upon them. Amen.

The Mission House consisted of two buildings in the year 1959. The Mission House was situated at 63 Melrose Road which had three storeys besides the basement. There were two large rooms and a kitchen in the basement. The kitchen was in the use of *Jamat*. The wall separating the two rooms on the ground floor was knocked down to change them in to a big room. There was a sliding door in between. Another two rooms were reserved for the office. There was a bathroom, and the balcony faced the outside. The upper stories were reserved for the residence of Imam Sahib. The building 61 Melrose Road was large and spacious which consisted of a basement, ground floor, and two upper stories.

Initially when the land was purchased for the Mosque it included the building 63 Melrose Road and an acre of open land. An English man owned 61 Melrose Road, who later turned hostile to the *Jamat* after it was converted into a Mosque. He also filed a suit in the court against the *Jamat* on the grounds that calling of Azan was an invasion into his privacy. However the case was finally decided in the favor of *Jamat*. During World War II, when bombs were being dropped around this area, he put a plate 'For Sale' in front of his house. But he laid down a condition that the agent should not sell this house to any person who belonged to Mosque. Hadrat Moulana Jalaluddin Shams Sahib was the Imam at that time. He

sent a new English convert to Islam to the Estate agent. He expressed his desire to purchase the house which the owner accepted and thus the house was bought by him and later transferred to *Jamat*.

This house has the honor of being used as accommodation for Hadrart Khalifatul Massih II during his visit to England in 1955; he stayed the ground floor. When I came here the entire house except the flat on the uppermost floor had been given on rent. I stayed in that flat until 1964 when I was appointed as Imam of the London Mosque and shifted my residence to 63 Melrose Road.

The Mission House at 63 Melrose Road was of great historic importance. Hadrat Khalifatul Masih III stayed here during his first visit to England in 1967. Great Muslim personalities, leaders of countries, and scholars visited this Mission House. Among them were President Tubman of Liberia, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, King Idriss of Libya, Sir Mohammad Iqbal (eminent poet), Sir Feroz Khan Noon (who later became Prime Minister of Pakistan, *Quaide Azam* Mohammad Ali Jinnah, and Sir F.M. Singhate, the President Gambia. Both these buildings were dismantled after the construction of a new building.

The organization of Khuddamul Ahmadiyya (organization of the youth aged between 18-40 years) had already been established in London in the year 1970. Mr. Khalilur Rahman Mullick, an active and sincere member, was the *Quaid Khuddam-ul Ahmadiyya*. In 1962 I was appointed as the first vice President of *Khuddamul Ahmadiyya*, Britain. In those days President *Khuddam-ul Ahmadiyya* of all the *Jamats* in the world was appointed in Rabwah and the Vice Presidents were appointed in other countries. Approval letters for the Qaids were issued from

Rabwah. In 1962 this system was changed and the Missionary Incharge of every country used to be nominated as Vice President Khuddamul Ahmadiyya.

In 1962 Chaudhary Rahmet Khan Sahib was the Imam of the London Mosque, but as he was aged about 85, I, despite being deputy, was chosen for post of Vice President, *Alhamdolillah*.

The organization of *Lajna Imaillah* has also been established. The wife of Dr. Naseem was its president. Dr. Naseem Sahib was a retired judge of High Court, Allahabad. He was the General Secretary in the executive committee of England in the year 1959. After Mrs. Naseem Sahiba, Mrs. Ashraf was appointed the President *Lajna*. After that, the wife of Dr. Abdul Salam served a long tenure as the President *Lajna* Britain. During her tenure this organization made rapid progress. New branches of *Lajna* were established throughout the length and breadth of England. Annual *Ijtimas* (functions) were started. Her co-operation with me as the Imam of London Mosque was exemplary. May Allah reward her abundantly. Amen.

The heating system was very poor in the London Mosque. During winter very few people came to offer *Namaz* in the Mosque, and the expenses for installing a heating system were extremely high. So from November till the Easter holidays, the mosque remained closed for visitors and the daily prayers were offered in the Mission House.

Winters used to be extremely cold during those days. In December, January and February and sometimes even in May also snow fall was recorded.

The main cause of worry in winters was fog and frost which sometimes lasted for three to four consecutive

days. Visibility was often reduced to only a few feet. Such a weather proved fatal for asthma patients. I remember once I was returning to the Mission House from a nearby market when suddenly fog engulfed the area and visibility was reduced almost to zero. I was greatly perturbed as I could not see the road. The severity of the cold added to my worry. I had no other choice but to stand aside on the pavement in a state of great anxiety and prayed to Allah to help me reach home. Suddenly I heard some one approaching. I requested him to help me. He held my hand and asked where I had to go. When I told him my address he said he too was going that way and asked me to follow him as he was familiar with that route. So I followed him blindly and reached my destination. I thanked that gentleman from the core of my heart. I rang the door bell. My wife was greatly worried on my account. Both of us thanked God for His mercy. In 1965 all the factories in London were shifted out of the city and thus much of the smoke disappeared along with the frost and fog. The buildings of London used to turn blackish due to the effect of smoke released from the burning of coal in the factories. The Houses of Parliament, St. Paul Cathedral and some other prominent buildings were cleaned which incurred huge expenses to the tune of millions of pounds.

In those days after both the Id festivals the guests were served food. The budget of Mission House could not bear such huge expenses, so the members were requested for contributions. Food was prepared in the basement of the Mission House all through the night. I also helped with some odd jobs along with other volunteers in preparation of food. Even non-Ahmadi Muslims used to attend in large numbers on the occasion of *Eid*. Among them were mostly belonged to Cyprus, Turkey and India & Pakistan. People

from the neighborhood and some local dignitaries were also invited to these guests. Thus on the day of Id, the whole day was spent in the garden adjacent to the Mission House. People would depart to their homes after having evening tea. On one such occasion of *Id-ul-Azha*, *Quade Azam* Mohammad Ali Jinnah also came to our Mission House in 1931. After lunch, he made a soul-stirring speech on the Independence of India.

Fortnightly meetings were regularly conducted in the Mission House. Non-Muslims and non-Ahmadi dignitaries were invited to such meetings. They gave lectures on various topics.

Mr. Anderson, a Christian who was an eminent scholar of Islamic Jurisprudence and a teacher of this subject in London University used to visit the Mosque regularly. He also made some speeches in our meetings. He also authored many books on Islamic Jurisprudence. Eminent poet Allama Iqbal and noted Journalist of India Moulana Ghulam Rasool Mehr also graced these meetings when they visited London to attend Round Table Conference.

Janab Abdul Aziz Din Sahib and Hadrat Mir Abdul Salam Sahib formed the soul and spirit of such meetings held during the year 1960. The latter was a companion of the Promised Messiah ^{a.s} and he was also member of the Indian Cricket team as a bowler. Later, he settled in England permanently. He was a great scholar and had absolute command over English. He would speak on Islam & Ahmadiyyat in Hyde Park every Sunday evening. I would also go there and persuade the people present around there to listen to the speeches of Hadrat Mir Sahib. He was particularly benevolent towards me. After the speech and question and answer session, he would go to

Lyons Cafe situated in Marble arch to have tea. He would take me along and tell his memories about Qadian and Sialkot. He had also been the *Ameer Jamat* Sialkot. He was an ocean of knowledge. I learnt a lot and benefited much from his experience and knowledge. He died in London and was buried in Brook wood. He was perhaps the only ‘*sahabi*’ (companion of the Promised Messiah ^{a.s}) to be buried in England. May Allah bless him with an exalted status in heaven. Amen.

I forgot to add that Hadrat Mir Abdul Salam Sahib often presided over the meetings held in the Mission House.

Mr. Maulood Ahmad Khan Sahib, Imam of the London Mosque, belonged to Delhi. He had graduated from Delhi and had a complete command over English. He was a man of letters and a great orator. May Allah shower His choicest blessings upon him and award him an exalted place in heaven. Amen. I was his deputy and also the General Secretary of the executive committee of the Mission House. I learnt a lot from him. He was kind and benevolent to me. He went back to India in 1962. He was succeeded by Chaudhary Rahmat Khan Sahib. He was an aged person and I, again, was his deputy. I was much younger than him in age. But his kind and loving deportment made me forget the age barrier and we both had harmonious rapport. In the beginning of the year 1964 he fell ill and requested to be sent back. His request was granted. Thereafter I succeeded him and thus by sheer grace of Allah I was appointed the Imam and Missionary In-charge of London Mosque.

Mr. Bilal Nuttall, an English convert to Islam, came to meet me at the Mission House a few days after I arrived in London. He was very good-natured, sincere, and

cherished a deep love for Hadrat Khaifatul Masih II. At the Inaugural ceremony of the London Mosque in 1926, Mr. Bilal Nuttall had represented the English side while Hadrat Malik Ghulam Farid Sahib had represented the worldwide Ahmadiyya *Jamat* in calling the Adhan. That was why Hadrat Khalifatul Massih II named this new convert Bilal. In 1965 when Hadrat Khalifatul Massih died, Mr. Bilal Nuttall sank into inconsolable grief. The result of the election of the third Khalifa was not yet known when Mr. Bilal Nuttall came to us and took out a photograph of Hadrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad. He said that he took this snap when Hadrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad was a student in Oxford and he was sure that he would be the next Khalifa. When I asked him how he could say that with surety, he replied that Hadrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad Sahib used to stay in the Mission House whenever he came to London from Oxford and he too would stay in the basement. He had seen Hadrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad from very close quarters. Often they spent most of the time together. Mr. Bilal Nuttall further said that he had found Hadrat Mirza Sahib to be very pious, God-fearing, and righteous even as a young man. That was why he believed he would be the next Khalifa. The next day when Mr. Bilal was sitting with me in the office, Capt. Mohammad Hussain Cheema brought a telegram received from Rabwah. It said that Hadrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad Sahib had been elected the 3rd Khalifa. I passed on the telegram to Mr. Nuttall, at which he burst into spontaneous tears. When I said it was a good news, he said of course it was but it reminded him of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II, his father, who had showered great favours on him and had deep love for him.

A MEMOIR

My relations with Mr. Nuttall continued for long. He would often stay at the Mission House for several days as our guest. He took great pleasure in cleaning and washing the Mission House and the Mosque. He knew some local cooking also. May Allah grant him a high station in heaven. Amen.

I met another new convert to Islam, Mr. Summer. Later we became fast friends. He had a passionate love for Islam and Ahmadiyyat and cherished true and deep love for the Promised Messiah ^{a.s}. He said he always kept the book 'The Teaching of Islam' at his bedside and would not sleep until he read a few pages of it daily. He was very punctual in paying his monthly Chanda (contribution) and his contribution exceeded the rest. He was reticent by nature. He offered lengthy prayers and would often sit in the mosque silently and lost in the remembrance of Allah. May Allah grant him His nearness and pleasure. Amen.

There is a sharp contrast between the England of those days and of today. Although in those days there were no facilities of refrigerators, freezers and cars, the people were more honest, upright, and were more cultured and civilized than the generation of today. People used to greet each other with "good morning/evening", be they friends or strangers. Philanthropy was at its best in these days. Their honesty was amazing. I was told that the milk man comes before dawn and kept the milk bottle at the door. He would collect the price every week. I placed an order for some milk bottles and for months I never saw the face of the milk man. He would keep the bill under the milk bottles every Friday and I would place the cash or cheque on Saturday morning. So this practice continued for a long time. Today the situation has drastically changed. If you don't pick up the bottles immediately, children going to

school take them away. So there is no question of putting cash or a cheque there.

Free home delivery service of grocery was also given by the shopkeepers. I would place an order on the phone with a grocery store near the Mission House and he would deliver the ordered items at home in the evening and take the bill. Now this system of delivery either does not exist or the customers are charged an extra amount for home delivery.

Anyhow, there is no doubt about this that the standard of character, honesty, sincerity, fellow feeling and good department was very high in those days in England. Bank Managers and the G.P developed personal friendly relation with the customers. I often got my cheques cashed without any recommendation. The bank staff personally knew each and every customer of their bank and mutual trust prevailed among them.

The Executive Committee of England in 1969 consisted of the following members:

1. Dr Mohammad Naseem
Bar-at-Law *High Court Judge Allahabad*
2. Mr. Abdul Aziz Din Sahib
Welfare Secretary
3. Moulvi Abdul Rahman Sahib
Member
4. Mr. Sahmasul Rahman Sb. Bengali
Bar-at-Law *Member*
5. Prof. Sultan Mahmood Sahid Sb.
Member

After I arrived in London, apart from being the second Imam, I was also entrusted with the task of acting as Secretary Executive Committee for financial matters. Besides that I had also to discharge my duties as Vice President Khuddamul Ahmadiyya.

There was also a finance committee in England which consisted of Mr. Abdul Aziz Din as President and Moulvi Abdul Rahman Sahib and Prof. Sultan Mahmood Sahib as its members. I was appointed as its secretary on my arrival.

The monthly chanda in those days was between 20-25 pounds which was not sufficient to meet the expenses of the Mission House. So the deficit amount was covered by the East African *Jamat* at the behest of *Markaz*. Three of the flats of 61 Melrose Road had been given on rent which fetched 15 pounds a week. Thus the total monthly contribution summed up to 80 pounds.

The cutting, pruning and cleaning of the orchard adjacent to the Mission House was a difficult job. We could not afford to hire a gardener. So generally this work was done through voluntary labor. Most often Janab Mouloud Ahmad Khan Sahib and I together did the job twice a week and we continued this practice for a long time.

Another devout Ahmadi and a sincere friend who assisted in the service of Mission House was Khawaja Rasheedudin Qamar. By the grace of Allah he is still very active in the service of *Jamat*. The one aspect of his character I liked most was his absolute obedience. He never showed off, and he never ever cared for personal fame.

My Association with **Moulana Mohammad Yaqoob Khan Sahib**

In the year 1959 when I arrived in London, Moulana Mohammad Yaqoob Khan was the Imam of Woking Mosque. Moulana Sahib was a native of Pirpiaiee, a small village situated a few miles away from ours. He had friendly relations with my father. He had also been the headmaster of Muslim Middle School, Lahore. Hadrat Sahibzada Mirza Muzaffar Ahmad Sahib was among his students. He served as the editor of Civil & Military Gazette. He also edited 'The Light' a periodical of *Anjuman Ishaat-e-Islam* for several years.

My father, when I was leaving Pakistan, asked me to meet Moulana Sahib in England and told me he was a pious and righteous person was very hospitable to the guests as per *Pakhtoon* tradition. I received a letter from my uncle Hadrat Qadri Mohammad Yousaf asking me to meet Moulana Yaqoob Sahib and handover this letter to him. He also advised me to read the letter myself first before giving to him.

I would briefly describe the contents of the letter of Hadrat Qazi Sahib which he addressed to Moulana Mohammad Yaqoob Khan Sahib. He wrote:

“When you were a student of Islamia College, Peshawar, I would regularly visit the college to preach to the students. You were one of those students who were under the influence of my *Tabligh*. There I gave you some of the books written by the Promised Messiah ^{a.s} to read and after a week I answered your questions and doubts regarding those books.

This continued for long. Finally you agreed to take Baiat at the hands of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih I. I had never introduced the name of the Promised Messaih ^{a.s} as a reformer to you but I always clarified to you that he is a prophet of God. And when you did Bait, you accepted the Promised Messiah as a prophet of God. I swear by God that when I did Bait I was absolutely sure that I had placed my hands in the hands of a prophet of God. You held the belief that the Promised Messiah was the prophet of God for a long time. So why did you let yourself play into the hands of Mohammad Ali Sahib and broke away from the *Jamat*?"

I rang up Moulana Sahib to tell him about this letter and also conveyed greetings of my father. Moulana Sahib was very pleased and asked me to personally meet him to handover the letter. So he invited me to lunch on the following Sunday. I reached Woking Mosque & Mission House at the appointed hour on Sunday. Hadrat Moulana accorded me a warm welcome. When I saw his face I immediately recognized that his face depicted the traits of piety and righteousness. His height and stature was commanding, his beard had turned white, and he wore a beautiful *Karakul* cap.

At first we talked about Hadrat Qadri Sahib and my father. Then a lavish lunch was served. By then Moulana Tufail Sahib, too, had joined us. He also served as Imam of Woking mosque for a considerable period. At that time he was the Imam at Berlin Mosque. During the course of discussion Moulana Mohammad Tufail Sahib argued that we (ahmadies) had unnecessarily believed Mirza Mahmood Ahmad to be the Musleh Mauood, and he asked

how we could prove that. I asked him if he believed in the *Hadith*, where the Holy Prophet ^{s.a.w} said that Satan cannot appear assuming his form to anyone in a dream, and asked if the same thing was true in respect of the Promised Messiah ^{a.s}. Moulana Sahib replied that he believed that *Hadith* to be true.

Continuing the discussion I added:

“I swear by God I have seen manifest signs in my dream that the Promised Messiah clearly mentioned Hadrat Mirza Mahmood Ahmad Sahib to be the Musleh Mauood.”

Then I narrated the following dream:

“I saw a large gathering in the middle of a vast ground. In the middle of it was an embankment where some people were sitting. I was also among them. Right in the middle of the embankment on a chair was seated Hadrat Mirza Mahmood Ahmad. There was pin-drop silence. Suddenly someone cried aloud that the Promised Messiah ^{a.s} was coming. I saw the Promised Messiah slowly heading towards the embankment. He was wearing a long cloak and had a staff in his hand. In a short while he approached the embankment and stood there where Hadrat Mirza Mahmood Ahmad Sahib was sitting and resting his hand on his shoulder he started delivering a speech.

The Promised Messiah ^{a.s} said :

“Some people are spreading canards about my son Mahmood Ahmad. Today I make it manifestly clear what his status is in the spiritual world.” Then he repeated the prophecy regarding Musleh Mauood in a loud voice and describing every attribute of the prophecy he would point towards

his son and say this boy is endowed with all these attributes. In this way he read out the whole prophecy and at the mention of every quality the Promised Messiah would invariably point his finger towards his son.

At last the Promised Messiah^{a.s} with a resounding and in a majestic tone declared:

“Remember Mahmood is a strong hill, whoever collides with him shall be reduced to smithereens and he shall be broken into shreds with whom he collides.”

With these final words the Promised Messiah^{a.s} went away.

After narrating this dream I asked Moulana Mohammad Tufail Sahib about his opinion. He replied this dream was a sign for me not for him as it was I who saw the dream, not he.

Moulana Mohammad Yaqoob Sahib had been listening to our conversation silently. Finishing my meals and offering two ‘rakas’ of voluntary prayer I sought leave of Moulana Sahib and also reminded him of Hadrat Qadhi Sahib’s letter. He said he would post the reply later.

A few days later I received his letter which was in Pashto. I read the letter which said:

“Every single word of what you have written is true. But the path I have taken has taken me far beyond the returning point. Kindly pray for me.”

Thereafter I and Hadrat Moulana Sahib met several times and I have always found him showering praise on Hadrat Musleh Mauood. I was amazed to find he had deep reverence for Hadrat Musleh Mauood despite the fact that he had broken away from the mainstream of *Jamat*.

(Moulana Sahib did not accept Hadrat Musleh Mauood as Khalifa and joined the *Ahle Paigham* Party)

Once, before going to Pakistan, Moulana Sahib and his wife Mrs. Saleema Begum came to Fazal Mosque in London and expressed his desire to spend the whole day with me. So I enjoyed his sage company and scholarly conference throughout the day.

He then went to Pakistan and wrote a letter to Hadrat Khalifatul Masih III expressing his wish to perform Bait. *Hudur* specially sent Moulana Mohammad Abul Ata Sahib to him in Lahore for this purpose. He filled up the Bait form and asked Moulana Ata sahib to inform me (Bashir Ahmad Rafiq) of his Bait. He said I was also instrumental in bringing him back to mainstream. Hadrat Moulana Abul Ata wrote me a congratulatory letter.

The same year I went to attend the Jalsa Salana Rabwah. Hadrat Moulana Mohammad Yaqoob Sahib called me, gave me a warm reception, blessed me with prayers and then enquired about Woking Mosque. I said that the mosque had now gone into the hands of non-Ahmadi Muslims. He said :

“Let it be so, Better it had gone. How can we attribute that mosque to the *Jamat* where we cannot take Bait in the name of the Promised Messiah?”

May Allah shower grace and mercy upon Hadrat Moulana Sahib. Amen. He was truly a scholar par excellence and a very pious and righteous person with an attractive personality and character. There was absolutely no contrast between his words and actions. Truly an amazing personality!

The Launching of Muslim Herald

In 1960 I decided to launch an English monthly magazine and sought permission from the Markaz for this. Mr. Moulana Ahma Khan, the Imam Masjid told me that it was not an easy task to start a magazine and moreover I would not be getting any substantial aid from the Markaz. But with prayer and after consulting some of my friends I wrote to Markaz for approval. The application was rejected by the Markaz for the following reasons:

1. Firstly, we can not afford to launch a magazine.
2. Secondly, the Muballagheen start a magazine with great enthusiasm but later they fail to continue it and as result of its closure they have to suffer ignominy.

I insisted and undertook the responsibility that if the Markaz gave its approval I would mobilize funds on my own and would not seek any financial assistance from the Markaz or the London Mission. At this, approval was given on the following condition:

1. You shall publish the magazine using your own resources. No grant shall be given from the Markaz or the Mission.
2. The Publication address of the magazine should be different from that of the Mission House so that this magazine may not be construed as directly related to the Mission.

I agreed to both the conditions. Initially the publication address was printed as 61 Melrose Road instead of 63 Melrose Road.

The first issue of the magazine consisting of ten pages was published in Jan which carried the messages of Hadrat Ch. Sir Mohammad Zafarullah Khan Sahib, Hadrat Sahibzada Mirza Mubarak Ahmad

Sahib and Mr. Basharat Ahmad Basheer including an article entitled ‘ Some Misconceptions About Islam in the West’ by Dr. Mohammad Naseem. Some 500 copies were published and distributed free. We also got an advertisement from the PIA, though after a hard struggle. Excluding the money we got from the advertisement the rest of the expenses were equally shared by Mr. Abdul Aziz Din, Moulvi Abdul Rahman Sahib and myself.

The very first issue saw the dawn of success by the grace of Allah. Hadrat Ch. Zafarullah Khan Sahib and Dr. Abdul Salam Sahib appreciated and encouraged us very much.

We got some more ads for the second issue. Of course it cost us a great struggle. The second issue consisted of 32 pages besides the title page. It was printed on art paper and carried the following articles:

1. Need for Effective Balance Between Religion, Philosophy and Science.
2. The Powers and Duties of Islamic State by Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II.
3. Islam or Communism by Hadrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad M.A
4. The Holy Month of Ramdhan by Moulana A.R Dard M.A

It sold like hot cakes as soon as it was published. In view of the readers' demand, extra copies had to be printed. The issue was also appreciated in non-Ahmadi circles.

I was the founder, editor and financier of the magazine. I used to frequent the Muslim restaurants during nights when they were about to be closed in order to obtain some ads for the magazine. Moulvi

Abdul Rehman Sahib assisted me a lot in this job. He himself was an owner of a restaurant, so he would accompany me and help me get some ads. May Allah reward him richly. Amen.

Soon the magazine became financially very strong. We began to receive articles of high standard and the magazine gained popularity all over the world. Its subscribers swelled up surprisingly both at home and abroad. Thus a seed gradually grew up in to a big tree. *Alhamdolillah*.

In August 1962 I appointed Mr. A R Chaudhary of East Africa as its joint editor. With his arrival the standard of the articles became even higher. During this period, special issues of the magazine were published:-

European Mission Number, Christianity Number, Hadrat Abdul Lateef Number etc.

The issue of April 1961 carried an article entitled: "What the War in Algeria is Costing France" by a non Ahmadi journalist Qureshi. It was greatly appreciated by those who supported Algeria's independence from France. So they contacted me and asked for 500 copies of that issue. They promised that would pay all the cost of printing and promised to provide subscribers for the magazine in Algerian Community residing in France. We, therefore, had to reprint the issue which not only helped us to attract new subscribers but also opened new avenues for the spreading the message of Islam.

Then after a few days I got a letter from the press in charge of the American Embassy. He wanted to meet me. So I went to his office at appointed hour. I was surprised to see a few copies of the Muslim Herald on his table. Firstly he expressed his appreciation over the selection of articles and the printing quality of the magazine and then

asked me about the quantity of its circulation. I told him that though only a thousand copies were being published yet its readership was much more than that. He expressed his wish that this magazine should have 5000 copies. Then he asked me about my salary as its editor. I told him I am a Missionary of Jamat Ahmadiyya and I am doing this work voluntarily and take no remuneration. In fact I do this job just to seek the pleasure of Allah.

At this he was surprised and asked what benefit I would get by doing a job without any pay. He said that I should be given some salary. I was not feeling comfortable to hear all this. Then he said that:

“My suggestion is that you should publish 5000 copies of this magazine. We shall pay you a handsome salary. You may also continue your job as a Missionary. In return, we want that you should publish articles against communism in your magazine from time to time. Besides, you have to publish articles or press releases without any editing that we may provide you occasionally.”

At this offer, I stood up and said “I am a Missionary of Jamat Ahmadiyya. This magazine is published to propagate the message of Islam. In principle we are strongly opposed to Communism and articles in refutation of Communism do appear in this magazine frequently, yet I can’t play second fiddle to the American Government, nor I can run this magazine under the subordination of the American Embassy.” That was the end of our meeting.

By the grace of Allah this magazine did a good job in serving Islam and Ahmadiyyat. The Imam of Poland Zouk Sahib embraced Ahmadiyyat through this magazine.

During the turbulent period of 1974 this magazine did an important job of giving befitting replies to our opponents. The atrocities committed on the Jamat Ahmadiyya in Pakistan were highlighted in this magazine with illustrations. All these news and pictures were later collected and published in the form of a book entitled 'From the World Press'. This book helped a lot in solving the asylum cases of Ahmadi refugees in Germany.

Mr. Mansoor Ahmad Shah Sahib was also appointed its editor to assist me. His articles were highly appreciated and the magazine touched great heights through his good offices. May Allah reward him abundantly. Ameen. He did a great favor to me by translating my articles from Urdu into English. He also revised and edited my books and helped and assisted me in the best possible way.

This magazine continued to be published regularly till 1984. During the initial period of 2 or 3 years, I was solely responsible for all the expenditure of this magazine. Later the Jamat of England took over its financial responsibility and relieved me of this monetary burden.

In 1975 the University of Micro Films Ltd. Of England took the responsibility of storing all the back issues of the magazine as well as the next issues on a micro film. This news was published in Akhbar-e-Ahmadiyya.

Launching of Akhbar-e-Ahmadiyya

Hadrat Mirza Basheer Ahamd Sahib r.a in one of his letters written to me in 1962 expressed his intense desire to start a newspaper for the *tarbiyat* of Ahmadies in England, which would help in strengthening their faith and also provide them a strong foot hold to stand firm on their faith. He said it didn't matter if it be of a few pages only. So complying with his request I started a fortnightly paper 'Akhbar-e-Ahmadiyya.'

It was a bilingual paper - Urdu and English. I myself did the calligraphy in Urdu. It was printed on cyclostyle machine and dispatched free of cost to the readers.

Apart from the news concerning Jamat, It also carried replies to the allegations of our opponents. Articles relating to religious ethics and values also appeared in the magazine. Initially the cyclostyle machine was run manually, which was a difficult job. After a few years the old machine was replaced by an electric cyclostyle machine. With that the quality of printing and script also improved. Janab Malik Khaleel Sahib and Janab Lateef Jaan Sahib helped a lot in writing the script of articles while Mr. Mohammad Ilyas Sahib Nasir assisted in printing. This paper also became popular in course of time by the grace of Allah. It is still being published. *Alhamdolillah*. (All praise be to Allah).

I was the founder of this paper and by the grace of Allah I served as its editor for a long time and also wrote articles for it. *Alhamdolillah*.

The Role of Hyde Park Corner, London, in the History of Ahmadiyyat.

Just facing the Queen's Palace in the heart of London city is Hyde Park, which is full of colorful flowers and high trees. On one side of the park one can see a long string of some of London's famous hotels, and on the other side is Oxford Street, the main shopping centre of London. Just in the middle of the park there is a beautiful lake known as the Serpentine, and spread over an area of 41 acres. During summers this lake provides an opportunity for boating to the people who come here for picnics. In the winter its water freezes, and it becomes a favorite with those who love ice-skating. On either side of the lake there are exquisite restaurants providing a variety of foods to the tourists who enjoy them in the park. The Lords of the city enjoy horse riding here in the morning. Even the members of Royal family can often be seen riding horses here at dawn. During the day the park is thronged with the tourists, students and other people who become tired after doing shopping.

One can see students in corners under trees lost in their study and completely unaware of the activities around them. Similarly, in some other corners of the park, whole families can be found having fun and enjoying their picnics .

Nobody bothers anybody. Everyone is lost in his own pleasures. Some people, who come to enjoy the sun (a great blessing in England), can be found snoring in the park.

The most important and interesting part of the park is that corner which is known as Speaker's Corner. This corner is right in front of Marble Arch and Oxford Street.

There is a great hustle and bustle here on every Sunday. Anyone can stand here to make a speech on any topic without any restriction of time. If the speaker is able to attract the audience it is well and good otherwise there are some speakers who go on speaking without any listeners.

The regular speakers bring a little stool to be used as a platform for standing on to make a speech. There is no need of any introduction to a speech. One just stands and starts speaking .

If the speaker is tactful and skillful in his oration, listeners flock around him. Inexperienced speakers are hooted away by professional hecklers who are always there to throw a volley of posers to the speakers. In this very park great politicians used to make speeches. The founder of the Welfare Organizations Mr. Baban started his political career from this park. Prominent socialist leaders spoke here. The golden period of the Hyde Park is that era when television was not still invented and people had no other means of entertainment to spend their leisurely hours. On Sundays the Park used to become abuzz with activities from the evening. The huge multitude of people was a treat to watch. Speakers displayed their oratory skills all around the corner. But there was no violence or any kind of physical attacks. These things were unthinkable in those days. Police were not to be found there as there was no need for them. There used to be heated arguments but no violence. When the speaker finished his speech people would disperse and enter restaurants to enjoy tea etc. Speakers would go their way carrying their platform. Thus Hyde Park would again be a tourist destination for the days leading up to Sunday.

Now the situation has completely changed. The listeners are no longer patient and the speakers lack

seriousness. The speakers and listeners of old days were serious and patient. Seriousness and patience were their main characteristics. Now most of the speakers use foul language and do not impart good ethics and values to their listeners. Even the Police can be seen around here. Should this situation continue, the British government will one day be compelled to close this corner for speakers much against their great traditional values.

There are some very serious and regular speakers of the Park who have been visiting the Park for the last fifty years on every Sunday and they attract the largest audience. They include Christians, Socialists, Atheists and also Unitarians. I have seen a speaker who has been visiting this park for the last 22 years. He is a silent speaker in the sense that he has got written on large size paper: 'The End is at Hand, Repent' and displays this chart. He speaks nothing but goes around the park carrying this placard. If somebody asks him a question, he starts quoting from the Bible and equates the modern times as prophesied in the Bible. His patience and courage are remarkable. He doesn't represent any Mission; rather he is a Mission himself.

It is an established fact that if anybody succeeds in making a speech in Hyde Park, there remains no doubt about his oratory skills, as a speaker has to face a volley of questions from the audience as well as from some professional hecklers who get on the nerves of the speaker and sometimes deride him in a most insulting manner. A speaker who succeeds in silencing his hecklers and handles the audience tactfully can face any audience anywhere in the world. Some organizations use the Hyde Park Corner as a learning stage for the speakers. Every week some young Christian monks make speeches here

under the supervision of their teachers. The teacher stands close to his students and guides them whenever necessary and also answers the difficult questions of the audience on his student's behalf. Generally speeches were extemporaneous. I haven't seen anybody reading papers. As the use of loudspeakers is prohibited in the Park, the speaker should have a loud voice to make his speech audible to even remote listeners. In any case, Hyde Park's speaker's corner is a great institution upholding the values of freedom of speech and expression.

The credit of introducing Islam in the Speaker's Corner of Hyde Park goes to Ahmadi Missionaries. It was they who started the noble task of conveying the message of Islam there which brought many non-Muslims into the fold of Islam. One of them was Mr. Bilal Nutell who had the blessed opportunity to call the Adhan at the inauguration ceremony of the London Mosque. Why the voice of Islam was raised from this platform has a very interesting background.

Hadrat Chaudhary Fateh Mohammad Syal^{r.a} was the first Ahmadiyya Missionary to be sent to England. He came here in 1913. He felt the need to start the task of the spiritual victory of Islam from Hyde Park. He, therefore, started a series of lectures and speeches in Hyde Park. By the grace of Allah this method proved very beneficial and fruitful. Let us read the narration in his own words:

“ I went to the Hyde Park on Saturday. Lecturers and speakers belonging to different religions were present there. But the audience around the atheists was the largest. I also joined them. The speaker who was an atheist leveled some allegations against Hadrat Moses and the old Testament and gradually he came on to attack the

other religions and even the existence of God. Then he allowed the audience to disprove his allegations in 15 minutes. Among the audience, mostly consisted of atheists while a few were Christians. Nobody dared to come on the stage. I grabbed this opportunity and spoke for 15 minutes on the existence of God dwelling largely upon Revelations. I explained that the knowledge vouchsafed through God's revelation was as authentic and reliable as that has been acquired through our five sense organs. Now it was the turn of the atheist speakers. He tried to laugh away my arguments and said that many prophets came in England and passed away, but as long as Pigget was alive there was no need of any other prophet. As there was no hope of getting a second chance to speak, I distanced myself away from those people. Some of people among the audience gathered around me and started asking me about revelation."

This was the beginning and this practice continued for a long time. The Ahmadiyya Missionaries continued to raise the voice of Islam and the Holy Prophet Mohammad (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) here in the Hyde Park. When Hadrat Yaqoob Ali Erfani Sahib came to England during his visit to Europe he delivered many speeches in this park during his stay in London. Mr. Bilal Nutell came into fold of Islam through his efforts.

Our Mission House was adjacent to the Hyde Park in those days. So our missionaries would bring those Englishmen who showed interest in Islam to the mission House and introduce the teachings of Islam to them and also give them literature.

Among the prominent personalities who brought victory to Islam to Hyde Park were Hadrat Kadhi Mohammad Abdullah Sahib, Hadrat Mufti Mohammad Sadiq Sahib, Hadrat Mauvi Abdul Raheem Nayyar Sahib, Hadrat Moulvi Sher Ali Sahib, Hadrat Mir Abdul Salam Sahib, Hadrat Aziz Din Sahib (father of Abdul Aziz Din Sahib) Hadrat Moulana Jalaludin Shams Sahib, (may Allah be pleased with all of them) Amen.

Hadrat Moulana Jalaudin Sahib Shams fought a successful battle for Islam in Hyde Park Corner. I shall give here a detailed account of this. During the year 1944 there was a famous Christian called Mr. Green. Every week he would deliver a speech and profess his faith that Jesus would come into this world in 1950 CE. He also started a magazine 'The Kingdom News' Hadrat Moulana Shams Sahib engaged him in six debates in the Hyde Park. These debates made Moulana Sahib famous overnight and Mr. Green had to make a shameful retreat eventually.

The first debate was held in June 6, 1944. It was agreed upon that Mr. Green would be given two hours to level as many allegations against the Holy Quran as he could. Hadrat Moulvi Sahib would answer all of them. Ironically by a sheer providential intervention Mr. Green could not present those allegations which he always made during his speech. The notes which he had made were also erroneous. The second debate was held on 16 June 1944. On that day Hadrat Moulana Shams Sahib made strong allegations against Bible. Mr. Green could not defend them. About some objections he said he had never heard them before and regarding other objections he said he would answer them after making preparation. In the third debate Mr. Green was to raise his objections against the Holy Quran. The debate started and Mr. Green raised the

question of Jinn. Hadrat Moulana Shams replied that Jinn in the Holy Quran referred to leaders and men of consequence and not to Jinn of the Arabian Nights. Mr. Green said until Moulana Sahib accepted an English Translation of the Quran to be authentic he would not proceed further.

Moulvi Sahib replied: “all translations of the Gospel have been done by human beings and I believe them to be correct. But if the translator erred at a particular point and I seek to prove my claim according to the Hebrew language, I have every right to do so. About some of the words, the translators of the Gospel published by different Christian Societies you have been saying that actual Latin word is so and its correct translation is this or that. If you have the right to find fault with some of the words found in the authentic translation of the Bible, why don't I have the right to point out any mistake in the translation of the Holy Quran?”

But Mr. Green did not agree with that and picking up his stool he moved away from there and refused to continue the debate as Moulana Shamd Sahib did not believe in the authenticity of the English translation of the Quran. The audience understood that Mr. Green had beaten a shameful and hasty retreat. On July 6, 1945 another debate was held on the subject ‘Death of Jesus on The Cross’.

Hadrat Moulana Shams Sahib produced six references from the Holy Bible that Jesus was taken down alive from the Cross. Mr. Green could not refute even a single reference. The fifth and sixth debates were held on 13th & 27th July 1945 respectively. The account of these debates was written by Moulana Shams Sahib himself. He says:

“On 13th July the topic was whether Jesus died on the cross and, if not, then where he went from there? In the first twenty minutes I explained that Jesus was taken down alive from the cross. Then he met his disciples, supped with them and bade them farewell after forty days. ‘Where did he go from there?’, In this connection I produced evidence from the research work done by Mr. Docker, District Judge Sydney and a German Professor, in which they admitted that Jesus was taken down alive from the Cross and died a natural death thereafter. Then I explained the real mission of Jesus according to the Gospel.

First he went to Damascus, and from there to Nasibeen and to India, where his tomb is situated in Srinagar, Kashmir. In his reply Mr. Green started reading reference from the Bible that Jesus was to die on the Cross and so he did. I said these references had been discussed the previous week and most of these references contrasted sharply with the actual facts. For example the act of releasing 2000 evil spirits from an insane person. Mr. Green said it was not mentioned anywhere. I showed a reference from the Gospel of Mark which says the number of evil spirits that entered into the swine was 2000. On 20th July Mr. Green spoke on the subject of Jesus becoming alive from the dead. But he said nothing new. After successive and continuous defeats, Mr. Green wrote to Mr., Abdul Aziz Din that he would no longer have any debate as my arguments were baseless and fruitless and could produce no result.

On 3rd August Mr. Abdul Aziz Sahib readout his letter. Thus this series of debates came to an end as Mr. Green beat a retreat.”

(*Alfazal Oct 12, 1945*)

These debates also hit the headlines in British Press. The Society for the Study of Religions in its quarterly magazine wrote:

“The Imam of the London mosque has come into area of open debate in London recently and is very energetic in presenting his faith to Christians opponents. The Imam is very skilful in presenting his case and quotes literally from the Bible.”

It is worth mentioning here that Mr. Abdul Aziz Din whom I have mentioned above, was a very active, energetic and devout member of our London Jamat. He came over to London in 1928. He served as the time-keeper during these debates. Once during 1966, we both went to Hyde Park for the purpose of Tabligh (preaching), and Mr. Aziz Din pointed towards a bench where Mr. Green was sitting. I felt a desire to meet him. So both of us went up to him. He received us warmly. When we told him that Moulana Shams Sahib had passed away, he became very sad and said tearfully: “He was a great scholar of Bible.”

During the year 1960, there used to be a fiery speaker known as Mr. John Webster. He was a communist and delivered speeches in support of communism in the Hyde Park Corners. Later he converted to Islam and began to speak on Islam. I gave him many books and invited him to the mosque, which he accepted. He was greatly impressed to read *The Philosophy of The Teachings of Islam*. The very next week he mentioned the name of the

A MEMOIR

Promised Messiah ^{a.s} in his speech in the Park. It created a great furor in the Park, people were provoked and Mr. Green continued to mention the Promised Messiah ^{a.s} in his speeches and did not deter from it.

Hadrat Moulvi Sher Ali Sahib regularly visited the Park during his stay in England to deliver speeches. He attracted a sizeable audience. Surprisingly, no heckler dared to disrupt his speeches. This was due to his imposing personality and spiritual awe. Hadrat Mir Abdul Salam Sahib Sialkoti was also among the regular speakers of the Hyde Park. I myself have listened to many of his speeches. He had complete command over English. He had reference of the Bible on the tip of his tongue. He was a tall man and he used a high platform, so he was visible even from a great distance.

The Hyde Park Corner's association with Islam is spread over a period of half a century and this Park is a golden chapter in the history of Ahmadiyyat. The Promised Messiah Alaihisslam says about the art of speaking:

“We want that the members of our Jamat should also learn to speak and their way of talking should be such that it should be beneficial both to the high and the low. In fact the finest speech is that which caters to the situation of everyone.”

(Malfoozat Vol X pp 324)

A Memorable Event in Hyde Park

John Webster's Acceptance Of Ahmadiyyat

Soon after reaching England in 1959 I started visiting Hyde Park regularly every weekend. In those days Hadrat Mir Abdul Salam Sahib, who was a companion of The Promised Messiah^{a.s}, used to deliver lectures in Hyde Park. He had a great command over English. His knowledge of Christianity was very vast and deep. He was an expert in the Comparative Study of Islam and Christianity and his analysis of both the religions rendered even the greatest Christian clerics speechless. Hadrat Mir Abdul Salam was a tall man with attractive features. He was a Paragon of masculine charm. During his speeches I stood close to him and when he had finished his speech I would pick up the stool which he used as a platform for delivering speeches and accompany him to a nearby restaurant to enjoy tea. Even some English young men who felt impressed with his speech would also join us and thus a question & answer sessions would ensue there. Such sessions helped me a lot in improving my knowledge about Christianity. In fact I gained an in depth knowledge about Christianity, its history, teachings and philosophy from his speeches and questions and answer sessions. He was a great educational institution for me.

Mr. John Webster had been delivering lectures in Hyde Park for the past 30 years on every Sunday without fail. He attracted the largest audience there. He was formerly a communist and generally he spoke on communism.

Hadrat Mir Abdul Salam Sahib died in 1960. After his death I regularly listened to the speeches of Mr. John

Webster with great attention. I was greatly impressed by his vast and deep knowledge, his oratory skills and his complete command over Christianity. Occasionally I put questions to him.

One day when Mr. Webster had finished his lecture and the audience dispersed, I approached him and introduced myself. I requested him to give me some time for the exchange of views. He told me that after the speech he goes to a café situated across the road. People interested in talking to him would also come to that cafe.

Next week when his lecture was over he asked me to accompany him to the restaurant for discussion. I went along with him. Some Europeans also joined him to assist him. We reached the cafe and tea was served. His fans would foot the bills.

I started the discussion with the message of Islam and Ahmadiyyat. I tried to convey the message and teachings of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) to him. At the end of discussion I presented him a copy of 'The Philosophy of Teachings of Islam' written by the Promised Messiah^{a.s}. He accepted the book with great respect and promised to read it carefully.

Mr. Webster's ability and his importance can be gauged from this that recently a book entitled 'Speakers of the Hyde Park' has been published in which Mr. Webster's name appears prominently. His introduction covers several pages.

Our meeting continued for several weeks. I gave him books on Ahmadiyat from time to time and also gave him the English translation of the Holy Quran. One day after his lecture was over he invited me to accompany him to the café and told me that he had asked his other fans not to come that day. He wanted to talk to me alone. I

accompanied him to café. Over a cup of tea he told me he had studied the book “Islami Usool Ki Philosophy” and read it several times. Every time he read it, new meanings dawned upon him. He said that after a careful and deep study of the book he was absolutely convinced of Hadrat Mirza Sahib’s spirituality, his great erudition and his deep love for Islam. Then he narrated one of his dreams. He said he had seen Hadrat Mirza Sahib in his dream. He said he had never seen such a dream. Narrating this he became silent for a few minutes and said “ Mr. Rafiq I accept Ahmadiyyat and want to join your Jamat. Please guide me what I have to do for this.” I told him that I would bring the Bait Form (Initiation Form) the next week which he had to sign after reading its contents. This would make him a member of our Jamat.

When I came out of the café I could not contain my feelings. A great speaker of England was obliged to take refuge under the banner of Ahmadiyyat. He became one of those white birds that the Promised Messiah caught in one of his dreams or visions.

Coming into the fold of Islam and Ahmadiyyat was a great blessing for him and at the same time it was a faith-inspiring incident for me as he was moved to join Islam through my humble efforts Alhamdulillah. I went straight to Masjid Fazal London and prostrated before Allah.

Next week when we met, Mr. Webster requested me to keep his acceptance of Islam a secret. I promised not to mention his acceptance of Ahmadiyyat in Hyde Park.

One day during a speech a couple of weeks after this event , Mr. Webster announced his acceptance of Ahmadiyyat. At that time hundreds of people were around him. Among them were Muslims also, and some were opponents of Ahmadiyyat. This news was a bolt from the

blue for them and they stood stunned to hear what Mr. Webster had declared. The next week when Mr. Webster started his speech some opponents of Ahmadiyyat pestered him with a volley of questions. Some even used filthy language for him. But Mr. Webster stood undeterred and contained his speech in support of Ahmadiyyat with great courage.

This continued for a few weeks. Hyde Park corner changed into a battlefield. Mr. Webster silenced his opponents and exposed their hollow knowledge. One day when his speech was going, some thugs attacked him and his hands were injured. I was also made a target but Allah kept me safe. One of our devout members Mr. Ilyas Nasir Dehlvi was also injured in this incident. At last the police had to intervene to disperse the mob. Mr. Webster continued to preach Islam and Ahmadiyyat and convey the message of the Promised Messiah^{a.s} in the Hyde Park corner for a long time. Eventually he left England for good and migrated to Australia.

After accepting Ahmadiyyat, Mr. Webster told me that he wished that I should practice delivering speeches by standing with him. But Hyde Park was not a suitable place for that. He said he could stand in Hyde Park but that I was not yet competent to make a speech there. It was therefore decided that we would practice this in Wandsworth Park, which is situated close to Fazl Mosque, London. Mr. Webster would speak first standing on his stool under a tree, and then I would make a speech. We started doing this and gradually people began to gather around us.

Rotary Club of Wandsworth

During the early period of the last century some businessmen gathered in a hotel in America. In the course of a discussion of usual business matters, they decided that the business fraternity was so engrossed in business that they hardly got any time to refresh their minds with entertainment. So it was agreed upon that they should meet on every Sunday at lunch time and that over lunch, aside from business, other interesting issues might be discussed. This was the beginning of the Rotary Club. Today there is hardly any country where the Rotary Club has not been established. The Club holds weekly meetings, and speakers from outside the club are often invited. The club also mobilizes funds for charitable organizations.

Generally the Rotary Club consists of members belonging to high society or the business class. Thus during meetings they get a chance to know one another. There are over 2000 branches of the Rotary Club in England. To get enrolled as its member a person should have clean conduct and be the owner of a business enterprise. We can find the cream of the society in a Rotary Club.

There is a strong Rotary Club in Wandsworth also. The Fazl Mosque, London, falls under Wandsworth. When the Rotary Club was first established in Wandsworth Hadrat Moulvi Farzand Ali Imam London Mosque was also among its founding members. He conducted the prayer at the inaugural ceremony of the club. From that day every Imam of the London Mosque including me got enrolled as its members and conveyed the message of Islam and Ahmadiyyat to the other clubs.

Hadrat Chaudhry Sir Mohammad Zafarullah Khan Sahib delivered addresses to the club on several

occasions. He used to say he was an honorary member of the Wandsworth Rotary Club. I became a member of the club after I was appointed Imam London Mosque in 1964.

I had the opportunity to convey the message of Islam and Ahmadiyyat in 500 branches of the club. In 1978 I was elected as the President of the Club unopposed. This news was carried in the local press. I was the first Asian to be elected as President of a Rotary Club in London. This gave me an opportunity to make contacts with dignitaries and celebrities of England and to convey the message of Islam and Ahmadiyyat to them.

Tabligh In Brighton

In 1960 the PIA purchased its first Boeing plane. In its inaugural flight the PIA authorities offered the Pakistanis living in London and some English dignitaries a free trip to Pakistan. I was also invited. So with the permission of Markaz I went to Pakistan in April 1960.

I stayed there for a month. During my stay I had the blessed chance to meet Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II a couple of times. Hudur was not keeping good health in those days. Once, in the course of a meeting, Hudur asked that special attention be given towards doing Tabligh (preaching) in Brighton. Hudur recalled his visit to England in 1924 and said he went to Brighton on an invitation from council of Brighton, and that he had visited the room where during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I some Muslim Generals of Turkey had been put up. The Kalima and some Quranic verses were written on the walls of that room. Hudur said in a passionate tone that Tabligh should be started in Brighton. On my return to England from Pakistan I made up my mind to start Tabligh in

Brighton. So I went to Brighton with Mr. Abdul Azia Din Sahib. I rented a room in the Royal Pavilion and advertised in the Local Press that lectures on Islam would be delivered every week. The local newspapers published my interview along with my photograph. About 5000 handbills were printed and distributed in homes. The hall was packed to its capacity on the day of my inaugural speech. Mr. Abdul Aziz Din Sahib presided over the meeting. Janab Moulvi Abdul Kareem and Abdunul Rehman were also with me. I spoke on the topic of Truth of Islam. After my speech a Christian cleric invited me to a debate which I accepted. The debate was fixed for the next week and topic was the "Death of Jesus Christ." The local newspapers published the news. The audience were also very anxious to hear this debate. The next week many people arrived in Brighton from London also. New Muslims of England also came in large number to hear this debate. In fact most of the audience were English people. We reached the hall on the appointed hour and waited for the clergyman. But he did not come. When people became hopeless about his arrival I delivered a lecture on Islam. The local English people were very impressed by the fact that the Christian clergyman could not hold his ground.

At the end of our first meeting, an English lady Miss Irene Crene joined the fold of Islam. Alhamdollilah. She was named Saleema. Her articles appeared in the Muslim Herald. Later she migrated to Turkey. After conducting three to four such sessions by the grace of Allah about seven people both men & women accepted Islam and thus a Jamat was established. This was all made possible due to prayers and special attention of Hudur Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II. For about one and a half years

such meetings continued to be held. Later when I was appointed Imam London Mosque we had to discontinue this practice much against my wishes, as I was alone and there was no other Muballigh who could be posted to Brighton.

Urdu Literary Society

I had been interested in Urdu literature, both prose and poetry, ever since my school days. Urdu couplets deeply impressed me. During my childhood days I used to enjoy listening to Pushto poetry in my village. As a school boy I developed a great interest for Urdu literature. It began with reading novels and short stories.

In my school days at Qadian, novels or short story collections were not available in the library so I bought them from the market. For that I used to cut down my pocket expenses. My favorite novel writers were – Moulana Abdul Haleem Sharar, Naseem Hijazi, Rais Amrohi and Mr. Aslam. I developed a deep interest in the novels of Abdul Haleem Sharar because I came across a writing of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih I in which he showered great praise on one of his novels – ‘Flora Florinda’. So I read that novel and also many other novels based on the history of Islam. Still I read Moulana Sharar novels, though I have little interest in fiction now.

My interest in English fiction was kindled when Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II, on observing my school report in which it was mentioned that I could read Urdu novels, advised me to read English novels as it would not only improve my English but also give me a insight into the lifestyle of English society. He said that Urdu novels are written in an exaggerated style and little truth could be

found in them. Whereas English novels, though based on imagination, present facts in a story-like manner. As a college student I read the novels of H. Rider, Haggard and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle with great interest. I also read the novels of Kipling, besides the novels of many other writers.

Seeing my interest in literature I was appointed as the Editor of the college magazine 'Al-Minar' for its Urdu section. My first article in the magazine was about the poetry of Kush Haal Khan Khatak. It was greatly appreciated by the readers. Later Moulana Abul Ata Sahib included me in the editorial board of the esteemed magazine 'Al-Furqan'. I wrote a number of articles for the magazine. I also served as the editor of *Review of Religions*, a magazine started by the Promised Messiah himself.

When I was in London in 1985, it occurred to me that all the books barring a few authored by the Promised Messiah are in Urdu, and this meant that it was the responsibility of the Ahmadiyya Jamat to strive for the development and fostering of Urdu. In those days only a couple of Urdu Literary Societies were to be found which worked for the development of Urdu literature. One such society was 'Tafreeh'. Its monthly meetings were conducted in Victoria Hall. Chaudhary Akbar Ali was the head of this society. This was not a purely literary society but a gathering of people having common interests. There was no agenda for the society. Chaudhary Akbar Ali would preside over the meetings and he invited anybody to speak on any subject. There was no restriction on language. People used to speak English, Urdu or Punjabi. There used to be no particular agenda or topic. Participants read out poetry or prose according to their will. Someone

cracked jokes, while others sang songs. The meeting used to last about three hours and at the end Ch. Akbar Ali would serve the participants with tea and snacks out of his own pocket.

In 1965 I founded an Urdu Literary Society and I was its founding president. Mr. Laique Ahmad who was my deputy in those days was appointed its secretary. The first meeting was held in the hall of the Mosque and it was agreed that the members should gather at least once a month. Literary figures of England would be invited, poetry reading sessions would be held and papers on Urdu literature would be read out. It was also decided that the society would be open to all irrespective of faith and religion of the members. Expenses of tea & snacks would not be charges to the Mission House account, but would be borne by the members in rotation.

The inaugural meeting was a great success. In the initial meetings some eminent and famous literary figures of England displayed their literary gems. Janab Mohammad Sharif presented a paper on 'The Poetry of Allama Iqbal' which was highly appreciated. In the later meetings, the eminent Urdu Literary figure of England, Ralph Russel, read his article on the poetry of Ghalib. He also narrated his life story in Urdu. Mr. Hadi Ali Chaudhary presented his paper on Urdu Naat (Poetry in praise of the Holy Prophet saw.) The society organized many international 'Mushaira' (poetry reading sessions) in which Janab Saqib Zervi, Janab Jagannath Azad, Janab Naseem Saife, Janab Ubaidullah Aleem, Janab Saleem Shajhanpuri and Janab Ch. Mohammad Ali Sahib recited their poetry. Almost all the well known Urdu poets of England participated in these Mushairas. This also helped in developing healthy and strong relations with the Jamat.

A MEMOIR

Mr. Nazim Khan Ghorī, Mr. Mansoor Ahmad B.T, Mr. Basher Ahmad Sami, Mr. Arshad Bangvi and Mr. Hidayatullah Bangvi did a great job to make the Mushairs a success. May Allah reward all of them abundantly. Mr. Nazim Ghorī is a member of Asian Elderly Society and so his friend circle is very vast. Recently he was awarded the title of M.B.E in recognition of his services to the elderly people of the Indo-Pak sub continent. He used his large friend circle in making our society a success. May Allah shower His blessings upon him and reward him richly. Amen.

Reports of some of Mushairas were published in the Jung, a daily paper. The daily Alfazal also carried news regarding Urdu Society from time to time.

It gave me immense pleasure when some of the Ahmadi poets admitted that this literary society helped a lot in honing their poetical skills and it encouraged them a lot to write better poetry.

This Urdu Literary Society is still working and I have been its president since its inception. Secretaries kept on changing. After Mr. Laique Ahmad Tahir, Mr. Mansoor Ahmad served as secretary and thereafter Mr. Bashiruddin Sami did the job. A historic Mushaira was organized by the society in 1972. That year Hadrat Khalifatul Messih III visited England. I acquainted Hudur with the activities of the Urdu Literary Society. Hudur expressed his appreciation and said he would like to meet some of the select poets of England. I humbly said that if Hudur granted permission I could organize a Mushaira. I requested Hudur to grace the occasion. Hudur kindly gave his consent.

The Mushairas were conducted in Mahmood Hall and could not have been possible without the sincere

efforts of Janab Nazim Khan Sahib, Janab Mansoor B.T Sahib and the late Bashiruddin Sami Sahib. About a dozen eminent and well known poets of England participated in it. Besides Muslim poets, Hindu and Sikh poets also recited their poetry. Hudur sat through the Mushaira and appreciated the good verses. Hudur presented fountain pens to some poets. Hudur especially liked the verses of my close friend Janab Baksh Lailpuri. Hudur called him on stage two or three times and listened to his poetry and gifted him a precious fountain pen which was in Hudur's use.

I had very close relations with Janab Bakhs Lailpuri Sahib. He was also the president of the Progressive Writers Association of England. He composed poems criticizing the ulema of Pakistan during 1974 when a wave of strong opposition rose in Pakistan. Some of those poems were published in newspapers also. Hudur also appreciated the poems of Sohan Rahi Sahib which he recited in his melodious voice.

At the end of the Mushaira, Hudur suggested that this society should be kept alive and he gave some money out of his pocket for the society. In yet another Mushaira conducted by Urdu Literary Society an eminent poet of the Indian sub continent Janab Jagannath Azad recited his poems, which were greatly lauded by the audience. Jagannath Azad occupies an esteemed place in the literary circle of Indian and Pakistan. By virtue of his presence many well known literary personalities of England participated in the Mushaira. An International Mushaira under the name 'An Evening with Saqib Zervi' was organized by the society which was attended by the Urdu poets from all over England and was a great success.

A Gathering of Urdu Literary Society, London.
By Ch. Mansoor Ahmad, Secretary

The Urdu Literary Society was founded by Mr. Basheer Ahmad Rafiq five years ago. He is also its founding president. I was appointed its secretary. Later Mr. Nazim Ghouri was appointed its vice president. The main objectives of the society were to foster Urdu language England and also to acquaint the younger Asian generation with the Urdu literature and its culture. The society also organizes *Mushaira* besides conducting various sessions in which literary figures read their papers on Urdu literature. Last year many international *Mushairas* were conducted by this society. Newspapers like Jung and Millat carried news items regarding these *Mushairas*. Janab Saqib Zervi Sahib, Janab Naseem Saifee Sahib, Janab Ch. Mohammad Ali Sahib and Janab Jagannath Azad Sahib attended these Mushairas as Chief guests. Among local poets Janab Baksh Lailpuri, Janab Bulbul Kashmiri, Janab Khawaja Mahmoodul Hasan, Janab Nasir Ilyas Dehlevi regularly participated in these *Mushairas*. The society also held a session with Mr. Ralph Russell, an Englishman who is held in high esteem among the literary figures of Urdu. He has authored many books on Ghalib.

On 29 May 1992 a session of the society was presided by Janab Aftab Ahmad Khan, Ameer Jamat Ahmadiyya England. The session started with the recitation of Holy Quran by Mr. Aslam Jawed. Mr. Jameel Qureshi recited a poem written by Mrs. Rashid of Canada which she had sent to Hadrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad Sahib.

Some of the couplets of the poem are given below
with their English translation:

This was a moving poem and it deeply touched the hearts of all those present there.

In this session Mr. B.A Rafiq read out his article 'Islamic Society and the West', in which the writer presented a comparative analysis of the culture of Islamic society and Western Culture. He also pointed out the issues where both the cultures were at variance with each other. He particularly mentioned that the new Asian generation being brought under the roof of Western culture is actually standing at a cross roads and it is looking at us for guidance and help. So their problems should be addressed, and they should also be given proper guidance. Their doubts should be cleared with broad mindedness and they should not be allowed to fall victims to an inferiority complex. Mr. B.A Rafiq statistically proved that the West is rapidly heading for disaster. Now there is only one solution left for their salvation i.e the West should adopt Islamic principles and culture.

He elaborated upon the current issues confronting the Western Society like relations between husband and wife, racial discrimination, sexual promiscuity and the menace of AIDS etc.

Janab Aftab Ahmad Khan Sahib after reading his article, read out the poem '*Dukh Di Wand*' (Sharing of Grief) written by Major Manzoor Ahmad of Sahiwal.

The audience appreciated every single line of the poem and unanimously declared that Major Sahib should be thanked for his beautiful poem. He had sent this poem to Mr. B.A Rafiq. The theme of the poem was the sad demise of Hadrat Syeda Begum Sahiba. The last two

stanzas of the poem are given here with English translation.

The second part of the session was reserved for the *Mushaira* in which Mr. Ilyas Nasir Dehlvi, CH, Abdul Karim, Mr. Hashim Saeed, Mr. Ajmal Ghorl and their humbke one recited their poetry. At the end of the *Mushaira* Mr. Mahmood Nazim Khan Ghorl, the vice president and I gave some suggestions to make the activities of the society more effective and popularize it among masses. The session concluded with a note of thanks from Mr. B.A Rafiq in which he thanked all the guests, participants, poets and Mr. Aftab Ahmad Khan Sahib.

The audience was also served light refreshment and drinks.

Invitations to Ambassadors, Ministers and other Dignitaries.

After assuming charge at the Mission House in England I felt the need to establish relations and enacts with the Ambassadors of foreign countries in England, and foreign and local dignitaries to make our Jamat better known in the society of England. A comprehensive program was chalked out for this purpose.

Its main points were:

1. To establish better and stronger relations with Foreign Ambassadors in England so that they may speak or write favorable reports to their respective governments regarding our Jamat. This would help us convey our concerns to their governments through them if per chance any problem arises for our Jamat in their country.
2. Prime Ministers, Ministers and intellectuals of other countries visiting England should be invited to our Mosque. They should be acquainted with the activities and charitable works of the Jamat. Doubts, if any in their mind regarding the Jamat, should be clarified.
3. Strong cordial and friendly relations should be established with the MP's, Police officers, intellectual, Mayors etc. of England. The Jamat's Literature should be given to them and they should be convinced that the Jamat is ready to co-operate with them in everything good.

So it was decided that prior appointment should be taken to meet the foreign Ambassadors in England. The Jamat's literature should be given to them and the

activities of the Jamat in their respective countries should be discussed with them.

Some of the Ambassadors whom I met with the delegation of the Jamat are as follows:

Ambassadors of India, Pakistan, Mauritius, Ghana, Nigeria, China, Russia, Poland, Liberia, Turkey, Syria, Sierra Leone, Gambia, USA etc.

The meetings proved very fruitful and beneficial for us. I give here an account of one such meeting for instance:

Hadrat Khlifatul Masih III visited Europe eight times during his lecture as Khalifa. In seven of these tours I was with Hudur. I accompanied Hudur as his Private Secretary During two such tours. When Hudur was visiting England for the second time, it occurred to us that we should secure a V.I.P lounge for Hudur so that Hudur and his entourage might not have to suffer the botheration of Immigration and Customs. When we contacted the British Airport Authority in this connection, they said it involved a long procedure to secure V.I.P status for anybody. For this, the consent of the government of the country to which the person belongs for whom V.I.P status is being sought has also to be taken. It seemed a time consuming procedure and also I was not sure of the Pakistan government's cooperation in this regard. Just at that time I met the Ambassador of Gambia, Mr. Jeeneeh. He received me very warmly. He helped us a lot in getting our Mission registered in Gambia.

I informed him of the coming visit of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IV. He said he would himself go to the airport. The rule is that if an Ambassador of a country goes to receive any person at the airport he is provided the facility of V.I.P lounge. He instructed his secretary to get

the V.I.P lounge booked for Hudur's visit. There after we always sought the services of Ambassador of Gambia for booking V.I.P lounge for Hudur's visits. *Alhamdolillah.*

The Ambassador of Gambia visited our mosque several times. I also invited him for dinner a couple of times which he accepted graciously. He had deep love for Hadrat Khalifatul Masih III. He had also great respect for Hadrat Ch. Sir Mohammad Zafarullah Khan Sahib. I also made several contacts with Ambassadors of Pakistan and built especially cordial relations with them.

I also hosted a farewell dinner in honor of the Pakistan Ambassador when he was transferred to Switzerland in 1972. He always invited me to every important function. The following report was published in the Muslim Herald:

Farewell Dinner to Pakistan Ambassador

On Friday the 23rd June 1972, a farewell party was given by the London Mission to His Excellency Mohammad Yousaf Khan the Ambassador of Pakistan in the UK on the occasion of His Excellency's transfer to Switzerland. The party was attended by his Worshipful the Mayor of Wandsworth. Their Excellencies the High Commissioners of Ghana, Gambia and Nigeria and by seventy members of the community. Other guests included the manager of PIA and Mrs Senkyi, the wife of the High Commissioners of Ghana and Mr. Standing.

After the dinner the gathering was addressed by her, the Mayor of Wandsworth, Mrs. J.D Standing. She spoke for some time on the London Mosque and the beautiful Mission building and her first impression of this

important center of the Ahmadiyya Community. Mr. B.A Rafiq, the Imam, then, in his address welcomed their Excellencies and all other guests besides the chief guest of the evening Mohammad Yousaf Khan. He briefly spoke on the history of Ahmadiyya Mission, its activities abroad and the part played by the London Mosque in furthering the cause of Islam.

His Excellency Sir P.M Singhate, Governor General of Gambia visited London in 1968. I met and invited him to the Mosque. He was an Ahmadi. So he himself wanted to visit the Mosque but luckily I offered him an invitation. He came to the Mosque on Friday. In the Friday sermon I quoted the prophecy of the Promised Messiah *Alaihisslam*. 'Kings shall seek blessings from thy clothings' and congratulated Mr. F.M Singhate on becoming a testimony to this prophecy. At that time he was accompanied by some of his ministers.

I hosted a dinner in his honor that day, in which Ministers and the Ambassador of Gambia in England and his staff besides local M.Ps and dignitaries were also invited. At the end of dinner I thanked all the guests. In his concluding address at the dinner, the Governor General lauded the activities and services of Jamat Ahmadiyya Britain. He also expressed his gratefulness to Allah for having endowed him with he blessing of Ahmadiyyat.

In 1965, the Prime Minister of Sierra Leone visited England. I went to the hotel where he was staying and invited him to the Mosque. He accepted the invitation. As promised he visited the Mosque along with the Ambassador of Ghana and his staff. A dinner had been hosted in their honor. In my address at the dinner, I accorded a warm welcome to the Prime Minister on behalf of Jamat Ahmadiyya England and spoke at length on the

activities of Jamat Ahmadiyya in the field of education in Sierra Leone. The Prime Minister promptly responded by saying that the *Muballigh* In charge of the Jamat in Sierra Leone was among his personal and close friends and that he was well acquainted with the services of Jamat in the field of education in his country. He expressed his gratitude and thanked to the Jamat for doing such commendable work.

The first Prime Minister of Mauritius, Mr. Ram Ghulam visited England in 1965. I met him at the hotel where he was staying. He received me warmly and paid a rich tribute to the activities of Jamat Ahmadiyya in his country. The Ambassador of Mauritius to England was also present on the occasion. He gave instructions to the Ambassador that Imam Sahib should be invited to all the functions held by the Mauritius Embassy in London. Photographs on this occasion were also taken which were published along with a detailed report in the 'Muslim Herald' of May 1968.

In 1975 I invited the Ambassador of Poland to a dinner in the Mosque. He came along with his staff. In my address I highlighted the activities of the Jamat, especially the charitable works of Jamat. The Ambassador in his speech invited me to visit Poland and assured me of all possible help during the tour. I kept in touch with him and held meetings with him.

It would consume a lot of space if I were to describe the relations established with the dignitaries, M.Ps etc. of England and this is not the subject of my autobiography. *Inshallah* it will certainly find a place in the history of Ahmadiyya. I invited some M.Ps and lords of England to preside over a particular session of the Jalsa Salana UK. Mr. Tom Cox M.P is also one of them.

In my opinion, a *Muballigh*, besides doing the work of *tarbiyat* and *tabligh* should also concentrate on developing strong cordial relations with local and foreign dignitaries. Such relations proved very beneficial for the Jamat later on.

The strong and cordial relations that I had developed with the local intellectuals, MPs and other dignitaries earned me the honor of being invited a couple of times to the garden parties of the Queen. These parties are held in the lush park of the Buckingham Palace. The Queen of England, Members of the Royal Family, Ambassadors, Ministers and other dignitaries are invited to the party.

Obviously on such occasions I always had the opportunities to introduce the Jamat and its activities to the participants. *Alhamdolillah*.

Relations with Mian Mumtaz Mohammad Khan Daulatana

I was a last year student in the college at Lahore in 1953, when anti- Ahmadiyya riots broke out in Punjab, particularly in Lahore Jamat. The *Majlis Ahrar* was behind these riots and it had the full backing of the Punjab Government.

Mian Mumtaz Mohammad Khan Daulatana belonged to a well-off landlord family of Punjab, the largest state in Pakistan. He had the full backing of the landlord families of Punjab, and he had a strong desire to become the Prime Minister of Pakistan. This desire always agitated him and he wanted to do something extra ordinary to fulfill his dream.

He saw the fulfillment of his dream in securing the help of the *Majlis Ahrar*, which was a sworn enemy of the Jamat Ahmadiyya. It is a long story and it has no connection with my biography. In short I want to say that during 1953 Mian Mumtaz Mohammad Khan was at the height of his political career. He did not want to confine himself to Punjab. He wanted to occupy the chair of Prime Minister of Pakistan. He made up his mind to sacrifice every principle to fulfill his dream. But destiny had planned otherwise.

Though the Jamat suffered huge loss of life and property in the wake of riots during 1953, yet by the grace of Allah the Jamat soon overcame the trauma of these riots and started making onward progress. But the blaze of these riots destroyed the might of the *Majlis Ahrar* and Mian Mumtaz Mohammad Daulatana completely. Not to speak of becoming the Prime Minister of Pakistan, he could not even retain the post of Chief Minister of Punjab and that was the beginning of the end of his political career.

Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto came into power during the decade of 1970, when Mr. Daulatana was among the top brass leaders of the Muslim League. Bhutto Sahib offered him the ambassadorship of England to remove him from political arena. He accepted the offer. The news was published that Mr. Daulatana would soon arrive in London as the High Commissioner of Pakistan to England. During those days, the Jamat had very healthy relations with the embassy of Pakistan in London. Ambassadors of Pakistan visited our Mission House on my request. I was also invited to all the functions held in Pakistan Embassy.

When the news of Daulatana Sahib's appointment as the High Commissioner to England was published I

thought that it would be difficult for us to maintain healthy relations with the Pakistan High Commission in view of the hostile role played by Mr. Daulatana during the riots of 1953. So I sought the advice of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih III in this regard. Hudur replied,

“Allah has punished Mr. Daulatana for what he did in 1953. We are not enemies of anybody. We leave this matter to Allah. You may keep in touch with Mr. Daulatana. If there is a visible change in his previous attitude and he is repentant of what he did, there is no reason to impose any restrictions on maintaining relations with him.”

I wrote a letter to Mr. Daulatana congratulating him on his being appointed as the Highh Commissioner of Pakistan and assured him of every possible cooperation from the Jamat. I also sought for an appointment with him. Mr. Daulatana acknowledged my letter and invited me to his office.

I reached the Pakistan High Commission at the appointed hour. He had arranged for coffee and snacks. Surprisingly for me he gave me a warm welcome. During the course of our discussion he said,

“ Perhaps you know that my father had very good relations with Hadrat Imam Jamat Ahmadiyya Khalifatul Masih II. My father used to consult him in every crucial matter and he was convinced of Hudur’s deep wisdom and his excellent quality of leadership. At home we often discussed Qadian during informal talks. Exchange of gifts was also a common practice between us.”

He said further:

“When I was to leave for Oxford for higher education, my father took me to Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II and asked me to sit at his feet. Mirza Sahib didn’t like this and he made me sit beside him. My father said to Hudur, “He is my only son and he is going to a overseas country where the status of moral character is not worth emulating. I am very much worried about him lest he should forget the Islamic culture and values under the influence of irreligious and free atmosphere of England.”

Hadrat Sahib said, “I will pray for him.”

Then he asked me to visit the mosque in London as they would lend me every possible help. “I shall send instructions regarding this today itself” He said. Upon reaching London I went straight to the Ahmadiyya Masjid situated at Putney where Hadrat Moulana Abdul Raheem Sahib Dard Imam Fazl Mosque London welcomed me. I spent my early days in a room of the mosque. Hadrat Moulana Sahib would impart me much advice and also acquaint me with Western culture in detail. I was very impressed by him.

After a few days when I had to go to Oxford, Hadrat Moulvi Dard Sahib also accompanied me. He saw me off at the college hostel and asked me to stay with him

at London during summer vacation. He asked me to feel free to ask for any help.

So after that I stayed in the mosque on several occasions. In Oxford I and Hadrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad Sahib became friends. I cannot forget the favours of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II which gave me strong support during my early days in London.”

I didn't know about it before. So I was very surprised to hear all this. It occurred to me that I should ask him how he reciprocated those favours during 1953. But I kept quiet.

While leaving his office I invited him to the mosque to which he agreed.

On the appointed day Daulatana Sahib arrived at the mosque. After having tea he expressed his desire to see the mosque. So I took him round the mosque.

A function was held in Mahmood Hall which was packed to its capacity. After the recitation of Holy Quran, I presented an address of honor to Mr. Daulanata welcoming him on the behalf of Ahmadiyya Jamat UK for coming to the mosque.

Daulatana Sahib started his address by saying that he had come here to renew the bonds of faith. Then he narrated all the story that he had told me previous day. Then he made general remarks about the political situation in Pakistan. At the end of his speech he said his doors would always remain open for us. He was ready to help us when and where any occasion arose. He said he would prove himself a faithful friend and well wisher of Jamat.

This function was a great success. Besides the local papers, the Jung, London also published this news with photographs.

I often visited Pakistan High Commission to meet him. At that time Mr. Hidayatullah Bangwi was the second secretary. He was a devout Ahmadi and had been in the foreign service of Pakistan for a long time. He would also join our company.

One day I informed Daulatana Sahib that Hadrat Khalifatul Masih III was coming on a tour to England. He insisted that he should also be given an opportunity to host a dinner in Hudur's honor. I submitted his request to Hudur on his arrival in London. Hudur was gracious enough to accede to his request.

Daulatana arranged a lavish feast at his residence. Besides officials of the Pakistan High Commission, Hadrat Ch. Zafarullah Khan Sahib and my humble self also attended the feast. There was separate arrangement for ladies. Hadrat Begum Sahiba, Mrs. Abdul Salam and my wife attended the feast.

Mr. Daulatana Sahib was still the High Commissioners of Pakistan in London when the clerics of Majlis Khatm-e-Nabuwat launched an agitation against the Jamat in 1974. He was deeply worried on account of this agitation and called me to his office several times to know about the latest situation. Once during our meeting he said that it was very unfortunate for Pakistan that a peace-loving Jamat was being persecuted on her soil. He also expressed his sorrow over being a representative of a government which was supporting the Majlis Khatm-e-Nabuwat, which was trying to foment trouble in Pakistan.

I have found Daluatana Sahib a very unassuming and polite person. In spite of belonging to landlord family and once being the Chief Minister of Punjab he was very social and a debonair. He always talked to me in Punjabi.

Sometime I would say I am a Pathan and don't know Punjabi well.

A Meeting with Khan Abdul Qayyoom Khan, Chief Minister Frontier Province.

Khan Abdul Qayyoom was a leading figure in the history of Pakistan. In the Pre-partition days, he was the deputy leader of the All India Congress Party. After the formation of Pakistan he was elected the Chief Minister of Frontier Province. He ruled the province with an iron hand and made drastic reforms to set the province going on the path of progress. Later he was allotted the Ministry of Trade & Commerce in the Central Govt. He had also held charge of many other ministries as well. During the Govt. of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto he was appointed Home Minister. He was a fiery speaker. He could speak Pashto, Urdu and English fluently. Hadrat Ch. Zafarulla Khan Sahib often spoke of him admiringly for his excellent knowledge and absolute command over English.

In 1953 when an agitation was launched against Ahmadies in Pakistan, Punjab came under the severe grip of this agitation. But Khan Sahib dealt with the situation with an iron hand and ensured that no riots should occur in the Frontier Province. This Province, despite being the base of some notorious Mullahs, remained peaceful and calm and the life and property of even a single Ahmadi was not damaged.

In 1967 I learnt from the local newspapers about Mr. Abdul Qayyoom Khan's visit to London. I immediately rang up Pakistan High Commission, got his phone number and contacted him. I introduced myself as the Imam of Fazal Mosque London and also said I was the

nephew of Khan Samin Jan, a noted leader and former minister of Education and Jails of the Frontier Province in a Muslim League Government. He expressed his pleasure that I had welcomed him on the phone. I expressed my desire to meet him. He said I could meet him any time.

Next day I went to meet him. He received me very warmly. We had a long discussion. I give here a gist of that:

Khan Sahib began by saying:

“I really appreciate your Jamat. I am deeply impressed by your Khalifa Hadrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad Sahib. No great political leader in India could prove any match for him. In 1924 I was a student in London. One day I read the news that Mirza Sahib was coming to England on a tour. I immediately contacted your mosque at Putney. I was informed of the date when he would arrive. So I, along with some Indian students, reached the Victoria Station where his train was to arrive. At the station Imam Sahib and other dignitaries of the Jamat were present. Some dignitaries of England had also come to the station to welcome him. We also stood by the side of the reception party. The train arrived on the platform. As Mirza Sahib alighted from the train I raised the slogan ‘Nara-e-Takbir’ loudly. The Indian students who were with me responded my call with a loud voice of Allah-o-Akbar and then the Victoria station resounded with slogans of Allah-o-Akbar (God is great). Thereafter, I met Mirza

Sahib, He blessed me with much valuable advice.”

Khan Sahib further said:

“In those days, your Khalifa Sahib was known all over India as a great political thinker also. Indian students looked upon him not only as a religious leader but also as a great political leader and statesman.”

Khan Sahib continued:

“In 1953 when the whole of Punjab was under the severe grip of Anti-Ahmadiyya riots, I was the chief Minister of the Frontier Province. I was fully aware of the anti-Pakistan activities of the *Majlis-e-Ahrar*. I also knew well that all this trouble was politically motivated but they had given it religious colour in order to achieve their political ends. So I made up my mind that the life and property of every Ahmadi in the Frontier Province would be protected at all costs, and that the agitators or rioters would have to be dealt with ruthlessly. So I held meetings all over the province and warned the Mullahs that anybody found taking law into his own hands would be severely dealt with. I imposed a ban on the entry of some of the newspapers published from Punjab which were supporting the mullahs. I also ordered some mullahs who might cause trouble to be put under house arrest.

One day a delegation of your Jamat in frontier Province headed by their Amir, Qazi Mohammad Yousaf sahib met me in this

regard. I assured them that it was my responsibility to protect the life and property of every Ahmadi in my Province. So they need not worry about that.”

I thanked Khan Sahib for telling me this detailed account of those days. I said I would send report of this meeting to Hadrat Khalifatul Masih III also.

Khan Sahib also paid a rich tribute to Hadrat Ch. Mohammad Zafarullah Khan Sahib and said:

“He is my role model in the field of politics. I have never seen a sincere, principled and self respecting politician like him. He was the greatest leader of Pakistan after Quaide Azam. But it is a great pity we didn’t give him the recognition he deserved.”

I invited Khan Sahib to the Mosque which he accepted. But the very next day he had to leave for Pakistan. So he apologized to me over the phone for his inability to keep his word.

Meeting with Mohammad Ayub Khan, President of Pakistan.

Field Marshal Mohammad Ayub Khan, the first President and Martial Law Administrator of Pakistan was on a visit to England in 1962. He stayed at Hotel Claridge's. Jamat Ahmadiyya UK welcomed him by telegraph and requested for a meeting with him. The President accepted our request and gave an appointment. As per the scheduled program a delegation of the Jamat of which I was also a member, reached the hotel. There we were informed that due to some unavoidable reasons the

President had cancelled all the engagements of that day. His military secretary informed our delegation that the President had cancelled all other meetings except with the delegation of Jamat Ahmadiyya.

He said that he would decide about the meeting after their arrival. So we were ushered into the waiting hall. TV correspondents, cameramen, some journalists and Pakistani officials were also waiting for their turn outside. From the situation prevailing there we guessed it would be impossible to meet the President that day and his inability to give us time was genuine and justified.

After a little wait the Military Secretary informed that the President would meet delegation. He said the meeting should not last more than ten minutes as TV and newspaper journalists were also waiting outside. We were ushered into the President's room. He received us very warmly and said:

“Just before leaving Pakistan I received an application from Jamat Ahmadiyya asking for foreign exchange in connection with construction of mosques abroad. I called the Finance Minister and asked him to grant the request of Jamat Ahmadiyya. The minister said that the Mullahs would launch an agitation if the request was granted and they would also apply for foreign exchange and the country was short of foreign cash reserve.

But I told the Minister that only Jamat Ahmadiyya was preaching Islam abroad and this great task was not being funded by any government. The contributions of the poor

people is the main financial resource of the Jamat.

The Mullahs would do nothing but create trouble let alone they would preach Islam. So I order you to grant the request of Ahmadis and if the Moulvis raise any hue and cry, leave the matter to me. I would deal with them. I deeply appreciate the services rendered by Jamat Ahmadiyya for preaching Islam in Africa. So you should convey my message to your center. I am ready to provide as much foreign exchange as you need for the propagation of Islam in Africa.”

After ten minutes, the Military Secretary opened the door and made a signal to end the meeting. The President, looking at his secretary, asked him to bring tea and snacks for us. He asked us if we could sit a little longer. We replied we were in no hurry but it was not proper for us to take his time as he had a busy schedule. At this, the President said the TV journalists could afford to wait longer. He then asked us how many people came into the fold of Islam through our preaching every year. We replied the number of such converts was very little but we were trying to dispel the distorted image of Islam created in the minds of the British by orientalists and Christian clergymen. We said we had achieved great success in our program. The misconceptions about Islam were gradually vanishing. A day would come when people of the West would come into the fold of Islam in large numbers. The President suggested that we should step up our missionary activities for the faster spread of Islam in Africa. He said if once we were able to create strong bastions of Islam in African countries, we could raise the voice of Islam at the

International Forum very effectively and successfully. The President said after a deep study of the African people's mind he had come to the conclusion that African people were sincere, honest, open-minded and to some extent innocent also. They tend to stick tenaciously to what they think to be right and do not care for anything for the sake of truth. We acquainted the President with the activities of our Jamat in Africa. Our meeting, which was to last ten minutes, lasted for 45 minutes. We came out of his room not before being impressed with the Field Marshal's politeness, straightforward approach and his simplicity, of course.

After a few years he again visited England. The High Commissioner himself rang me up and informed me of the President's visit. He also said that the President wished that the name of the Imam Masjid London be included among the dignitaries who would receive him at the Airport. The High Commissioner sent his car for me. When the President came out of the aircraft, the people lined up to receive him. He began to shake hands with everyone. When he came up to meet me he said, "Imam sahib how many Christians have you converted to Islam this year?" Then he instructed his secretary to include my name among the invitees to every public function to be held during his tour. I was highly impressed with his sagacity and nobility of character.

During the year 1972 I had the honor to serve as the Private Secretary of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih III. In August 1971 Hudur left for Islamabad where the Jamat had hired a bungalow. In that year Mr. M.M Ahmad, Finance Minister was attacked by a Mullah. He was critically injured but by the grace of Allah he survived the attack. Due to this incident Hudur prolonged his stay in

Islamabad. We came to know that former President of Pakistan Field Marshall Mohammad Ayoob Khan was leading his post-retirement life in a bungalow near to the one where Hudur was staying. Sahibzada Mirza Farid Ahmad and I requested Hudur to give us permission to visit the Field Marshal. Hudur granted our request. We sought an appointment from his secretary and reached his bungalow at 11 am the next day. The Field Marshal's memory was remarkable. I was very impressed with his extraordinary memory. As we entered his drawing room he cast a look at me and asked if I was no longer posted in London. I said Hudur had called me back to Pakistan and at present, I was his Private Secretary. We discussed many things. He was particularly interested in the Jamat's progress. Then he humbly asked us to request Hudur to pray for him and also expressed his desire to meet Hudur. So when we submitted the report of our meeting to Hudur and told him that the Field Marshal had become very senile due to illness, Hudur said in that case he himself would go to meet him. Therefore a time was fixed for the meeting. Hudur had a long meeting with the Field Marshal. After the meeting was over, the Field Marshal himself came up to Hudur's car to see him off. He opened the door of the car for Hudur and again requested for prayer.

Meeting with Mr. Sheikh Abdullah

In 1964, Mr. Sheikh Abdullah visited England. He had just been released from a long imprisonment. In England there was a wave of great excitement prevailing among the Pakistani residents in general and among Kashmiris in particular. Reception committees were

constituted in almost all the major cities and they had planned busy schedule for Sheikh Sahib.

I, too, had deep regard for Sheikh Sahib. I was particularly impressed by the sacrifice he undertook by suffering the torments of imprisonment for the welfare of humanity. It seemed as if he had dedicated his life for his people. I was also aware of the meritorious services he had rendered for his nation under the guidance of Hadrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad Sahib r.a the second Khalifa of Jamat. Sheikh Sahib deeply acknowledged the favors of Jamat Ahmadiyya and especially thanked Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II in his letters which have been recorded in the history of Jamat Ahmadiyya.

When Mr. Sheikh Sahib arrived in England I felt an intense desire to meet this great figure. I tried to contact him through various sources but due to a busy schedule he could not be available on the phone. But I didn't give up and at last I succeeded. I told him I was the Imam and also the Missionary in charge of the Ahmadiyya Fazl Mosque, London. Mr. Sheikh Sahib expressed his pleasure over this and said he was also looking forward to contact the Ahmadiyya Jamat in England but that he had such a busy schedule that there was no spare time. Mr. Sheikh Sahib was engaged in attending functions, feasts and addressing his fans.

Anyhow he said we could have a brief meeting and discussion if I could contact him at a certain hall in London, where a function was being held in his honour. He asked me to come to the side of the stage half an hour before the program started. So this was decided.

I reached the place on the appointed day accompanied by Dr. Sardar Nazir Ahmad. Sheikh Sahib had positioned two young men at the entrance instructing

them to lead me to him as soon as I came. There were chairs on the stage. Sheikh Sahib was flanked by his close aide and confidant Mirza Afzal Beg Sahib. Some leading Kashmiri figures of England were also present. There were about 10 people there. Sheikh Sahib started the discussion by asking about the welfare of Hadrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad Sahb. I replied that Hudur was not keeping good health and that sometimes his condition became critical. At this Sheikh Sahib became tearful. He took out a handkerchief from his pocket and wiping his tears said to me, "I hope you write letters to him." I said I wrote every week. Then he said, "Every time when you write a letter to him convey my salam to him and tell him that I could not keep in touch with him due to long imprisonment but I did not forget him even for a single moment and I never failed to pray for him." Then addressing me he said,

"You cannot count the number of favors that Hadrat Mirza Sahib has showered on me. He trained me just like his child and stood by me in every difficulty. Without his support, guidance and encouragement I would not have been what I am today."

Then he narrated the services of Hudur. He said he was pleased to know that Jamat Ahrar also entered this arena on the pretext of helping us. But my happiness soon vanished as I realized that they (Majlis Ahrar) had selfish Motives behind their so-called guileless facade.

We discussed this topic for a long time. Sheikh Sahib enquired about Moulana Dard Sahib. I said he had passed away. Then he asked about Zainul Abdeen Waliullah Shah. I said he had also died. Sheikh Sahib became tearful and began to narrate the meritorious

services rendered by these two august figures. In the end Sheikh Sahib asked me to request Hudur for prayers besides conveying his salam.

Now it was time for his speech. The hall was packed to its capacity and was resounding with the slogans of Allah-o-Akbar. As I rose to go into the hall, Sheikh Sahib insisted that I should sit on the stage during his speech.

So I occupied a chair on the stage and listened to his speech. Sheikh Sahib was a gifted orator besides being an ocean of knowledge. The audience were enthused by his skillful oration.

I came back much impressed by his speech, personality, humility and character. The thing that impressed me most was that even in such a large gathering he didn't fear to praise, commend and acknowledge the services of Hadrat Imam Jamat Ahmadiyya despite knowing that it might irk a section of the audience.

Recently I chanced upon a book entitled "Atish-e-Chinar" by Sheikh Sahib. I was surprised to read that Sheikh Sahib cut off his relations with Jamat Ahmadiyya as it was preaching Islam in Kashmir. If Sheikh Sahib really entertained such an attitude towards our Jamat, then why he had praised the Jamat and especially Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II during the course of our long meeting. It seems somebody else has distorted his ideas or added some sentences on Sheikh Sahib's behalf. These could not be Sheikh Sahib's original words. Members of our Jamat continued to meet him till his death, but nobody ever felt that Sheikh Sahib was displeased with the activities of Jamat.

A Meeting with Peer Sahib of Manki Shareef

Way back in 1953 I boarded a bus at Nowshehra for Aibottabad. I had purchased a first class ticket. There was still some time left for the departure of the bus. So I bought some magazines and newspapers from a nearby bookstall, occupied my seat and began to read them. After a few minutes the driver and the conductor of the bus came to me with bated breath and asked me to vacate the first class seat. I refused to comply with their request as I had the first class ticket and asked them why I should take the back seat. As this discussion was going on, an elderly man escorted by his bodyguards got into the bus and told the driver that if this man (I) had the first class ticket, he had every right to occupy this seat. Saying this he occupied the seat next to mine but his bodyguards went to the rear side seats. This man was none other than Pir Amin Hasanat of Manki Shareef. Though I had heard his name, I never had the chance to meet him. I had listened to his speeches supporting the creation of Pakistan during pre-independence days. In fact he was very instrumental in establishing Muslim League Party on a firm footing and defeating the congress government in the Frontier Province. Pir Sahib was one of the brave soldiers (stalwarts) of Quaide Azam.

As the bus started, he asked who I was and where I lived. I gave my introduction and said I was a native of Muhib Banda. At this Pir Sahib said that Khan Samin Jan Khan also belonged to Muhib Banda. I said he was my uncle. Pir Sahib was very delighted to know this and said Samin Jan Khan was his political mentor. Then he asked my father's name. I said I was the son of Janab Danishmond Khan. Pir Sahib said he knew my father and

also that he was an Ahmadi. I said I am also an Ahmadi by the grace of Allah.

Then Pir Sahib said,:

“You (Ahmadies) are very fortunate. Allah has given you a great leader who has no parallel throughout India. I am referring to Hadrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad Sahib.”

I was surprised to hear Pir Sahib’s words. I asked him how he knew him and if he had ever met him. Pir Sahib replied,:

“I am well aware of his services and his unparalleled contribution in the creation of Pakistan. But when I had the chance to meet him a couple of times and closely watched him I was greatly impressed by his remarkable ability, extraordinary wisdom, and vast knowledge.”

Regarding his meetings with Hudur, Pir Sahib said,:

“Once I went to Karachi. There some people of your Jamat came to me. They told me that the Khalifa of their Jamat was also in Karachi and they had hosted a tea party in his honor. They expressed their desire that I should also join them at the party. I accepted the invitation thinking that this would give me a chance to meet the supreme leader of the Ahmadis. On the appointed day I was taken to a spacious bungalow where many Ahmadi people had already gathered. Hadrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad Sahib was sitting on a chair in the verandah. I was ushered into his presence. Janab Mirza Sahib

stood up and came forward a few steps to welcome and receive me. He made me sit beside him and thanked me for accepting the invitation. Then a casual talk began between us. During the discussion he talked about my father, grandfather and great grandfathers. He told me some facts of our family which I had never heard before. I was surprised at his vast knowledge about our family. I asked him from where he had gained so much knowledge about our family. He replied, "Though I have not made any particular research about your family, I know about most of the famous families especially those who have a religious background." When our discussion switched over to politics, he gave me such a detailed account of the history and political situation of the Frontier Province, the culture and traditions of the Pathans that I was completely overwhelmed by his vast and profuse knowledge. Though a Pathan myself I didn't have knowledge of those things. He appreciated my endeavors in the creation of Pakistan and also mentioned about his association with Quaide Aham. He also told me about his relations with great Indian leaders like Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhi Ji and some others. I was deeply impressed to meet him and developed a sense of great respect and affection for him after this meeting."

Janab Pir Sahib continued further:

“I met Hadrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad Sahib at Lahore for the second time where he had come to address a gathering. After listening to his speech, I was fully convinced that Hadrat Mirza Sahib was the greatest contemporary leader of India who was possessed of exceptional political and religious wisdom. No other leader, however great, could prove a match for him.”

I had the opportunity to meet Pir Sahib sometime later and found him full of praise for the Ahmadiyya Jamat.

Mr. Saqib Zervi Sahib

During my student life in Qadian I had listened to the melodious voice of the late Janab Saqib Zervi Sahib and also had the opportunity to watch & hear him reciting the poetry of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IInd r.a in his melodious voice at the Annual Gatherings of Qadian & Rabwah. By the grace of Allah he was a poet par excellence and was also bestowed with a sweet voice. When I was a student of Taleem-ul Islam College Lahore I attended a Mushaira where Saqib Sahib recited his poems. The audience was overwhelmed with joy to listen to his poetry. In fact, Saqib Sahib dominated throughout the Mushaira. After the mushaira was over I boarded a bus. Two poets who participated in the Mushaira were sitting in front of me. One of them wanted to know the views of his companion about the poems recited by Janab Saqib Sahib. His companion replied that he was still under the effect of the spell cast by the melodious voice of Saqib Sahib. So he would not be able to make any comments about his poetry

until it was published in some newspaper or magazine the next day. During my college days I had the opportunity to meet Saqib Sahib a few times but we did not have much acquaintance with each other. In 1959 when I came to London I started correspondence with him and thus our relationship developed. In 1964 I founded a Literary Society. At that time there was no society of its kind in London. I informed Saqib Sahib regarding this society and requested him to impart his advice for the development and success of this Literary Society. In his reply he said,

“Dear Mr. Rafiq

Asslamo Alaikum w.w

So, I see you did not desist from planting a new sapling of a literary society. Perhaps the following couplet immortalizes the meritorious services of the ardent lovers of literature like you:

ہم سے کچھ ابلہ پا تھک کے جہاں رُک جائیں
وہ بیاباں بھی گلستاں میں بدل جاتا ہے

*The wilderness, where the like of us
happen to sojourn after weariness with our
blistered feet, blossoms with luxuriant
flowers.*

May Allah keep up the enthusiasm of your immense aesthetic sense and taste for literature. I wish that, through your efforts, this nascent literary society of Wandsworth succeeds in scattering such healthy seeds of literary taste as would develop to produce luscious fruits which would smell more of afflictions of real life than pains of fanciful love and present the beauties of experience

and perception rather than the charms of poetic imagery."

My correspondence with Janab Saqib Sahib continued and our mutual affection developed further. During this period I occasionally discussed Saqib Sahib's literary engagements with Hadrat Ch. Sir Mohammad Zafarullah Khan Sahib. Hadrat Ch. Sahib once told me that he regularly read three periodicals of the Jamat. The first one was Al-Fazal, the second one was 'Al-Furqan' and the third one was 'Lahore'. Hadrat Ch. Sahib used to mention Saqib Sahib's name with great affection and respect.

During the last period of the 1960s I wrote to Saqib Sahib that Hadrat Ch. Sahib and the Jamat of England would be much honored and pleased if he could spare some time to visit England. Janab Saqib Sahib replied that he accepted our invitation but he would not be able to come until he had made alternative arrangements for the publishing of 'Lahore'. A few days later he informed me that he was ready to come. After making complete arrangements for his journey, I informed him. When he reached England, it seemed as if the bleak and barren literary desert of England had become fully alive with the coming of spring. Daily literary sessions with Saqib Sahib were conducted in the evening in a room of the Mission House. People used to bring their tape recorders with them to record the poems and lyrics of Janab Saqib Sahib. People living on the outskirts of London would come at the weekends and delighted themselves by participating in the literary sessions with Saqib Sahib. I had also informed Hadrat Ch Sahib in Holland of Janab Saqib Sahib's visit. So after few days he also reached London and our evening sessions became even livelier. I also contacted the BBC

Urdu service. They immediately invited Saqib Sahib for an interview. So this long interview was broadcast which was listened to by millions of Pakistanis living outside their country.

I also organized a Mushaira under the Literary Society in which eminent poets of England recited their poetry and they also had the opportunity to listen to Janab Saqib Sahib's poems. After few days, some Ahmadies living in Yorkshire invited Mr. Saqib to their city. When the arrangements were completed Hadrat Ch. Zafarullah Khan Sahib, Janab Saqib Sahib and I left for Yorkshire in a car which was being driven by me. Hadrat Ch Sahib was sitting on a seat beside me and Janab Saqib was seated behind. During the journey at the request of Hadrat Ch Sahib, Janab Saqib recited his famous poem which he had read in the presence of Khawaja Nazimuddin, Governor General Pakistan. Saqib Sahib also regaled us with some of his choicest lyrics. Under the spell of the poetry and voice of Janab Saqib Sahib we didn't feel the exertion of the four to five hours long journey. We stayed at Late Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan's home in Yorkshire. Every evening 'Poetry Sessions with Saqib Zervi' were held at different places in which poets of Yorkshire also participated. During 1970-71, when this humble one was appointed as Private Secretary to Khalifatul Masih III, my relations and association with Janab Saqib Sahib strengthened further. Hadrat Khalifatul Masih III and Janab Saqib Sahib had great and deep affection for each other. Janab Saqib would visit Hudur twice a month and regaled the family members of Hudur with his marvelous poetry in his melodious voice. Separate arrangements were also made for the ladies of the house. Janab Saqib Sahib would often bring some poet or writer or journalist of repute with him and

thus those non-Ahmadi literary figures had also the opportunity to meet and talk to Hudur.

During those years I decided to construct a house of my own in Rabwah. After a few days Janab Saqib Sahib came to Rabwah and I went to meet him at Dar-ul Ziafat. Before I took leave of him, he handed me an envelope and asked me read it at home. When I opened the envelope at home I was surprised to see a handsome amount besides a letter in it. In the letter he wrote, "Please consider this as a brick for the construction of your house from your brother".

At this my heart moved to pray for him. I was well aware of the financial constraints he was confronting to run the weekly 'Lahore'. This was a great favour of him to me.

It was the occasion of marriage of Saqib Sahib's son. At that time I was in Islamabad with Hudur as his Private Secretary. Janab Saqib sahib came to Islamabad and requested Hudur to attend this marriage. But Hudur expressed his inability to do so on account of pre-occupations. Then Saqib Sahib requested Hudur to permit me to attend the marriage. Hudur kindly granted his request on the condition that only a day's leave will be given. So on the day of the marriage I boarded the morning flight to Lahore and attended the marriage. Janab Saqib Sahib assigned me the duty of entertaining the guests. Mir Zafarullah Sahib Jamali who later became the Prime Minister of Pakistan also attended this marriage. I returned to Islamabad by the evening flight. The reminiscences of Saqib Sahib would never come to an end and in this brief note I can not encompass the account of my association, affection and love with Saqib Sahib. He was not only a great writer and a poet par-excellence but a

great man also. He was always ready for any sacrifice for Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya and the Jamat. Self respect and a sense of honor were the greatest hallmarks of his character. Saqib Sahib was a fearless and brave person and possessed a great sense of honor.

Educational & Trabiyyati Activities in England

Upon my arrival here in England I found that our Jamat consisted mostly of young people and a very few of them were married. So educating their children was not a big task. But in and after 1962 a large number of Ahmadi people along with their families migrated to England from Pakistan, India & East Africa. The need to educate their young children was strongly felt, so that they should not bid adieu to their Islamic identity and culture under the influence of a Western life-style. This was a tall order. So, I not only consulted the executive committees of Khuddam, Ansar & Lajna of England but also requested Hadrat Ch. Mohammad Zafarullah Khan Sahib for his assistance. I also wrote to the Markaz for guidance. After long deliberations and consultations the following suggestions were finalized:

- A Sunday school should be started in the mosque immediately in which the children should be taught the Holy Quran and the fundamentals of Islam.
- Books on Islamic topics should be written in an easy to understand language for the Tarbiyat of the younger generation.
- The younger generation should be trained in the art of delivering speeches and they should also be

motivated to write articles on Islamic topics so that they may propagate Islam & Ahmadiyyat to others.

- Every year some days should be set aside for Tabligh during which the younger generation in particular and all the members of Jamat in general should be assigned the task of Tabligh for the whole day.
- The younger generation should be taught to observe the dignity of labour.

This program was immediately implemented and the results were quite encouraging. By the grace of Allah, today most of the persons engaged in the service of the Jamat are those who participated in and benefited from the above program.

Under this program the first task was to appoint teachers for the Sunday school. I requested Mr. Khawaja Bashir Ahmad, Mr. A.R Chaudhary, Mr. Dawood Ahamd Gulzar and Moulvi Abdul Rahman Sahib to teach the children in the school. Mr. Bashir Ahmad Khawaja was appointed the first headmaster of the school. Ahmadi Children started coming to the mosque from far and near places along with their parents. Later Mr. Malik Abdul Aziz Sahib was also included in the teaching staff. By the grace of Allah, we were able to teach the Holy Quran to scores of children & also catered to their needs of Tarbiyat. This school is still running today and is rendering commendable services to the Jamat. Alhamdolilllah

A weekly seminar for the upper age group children was organized at the suggestion of Hadrat Ch Sir Mohammad Zafarullah Khan Sahib. I and Hadrat Ch. Sahib used to deliver lectures on various Islamic topics in this seminar. Other scholars & Mubaligheen of the

Jamat were also invited to deliver lectures. Mr. Laeeque Ahmad Tahir was Naib Imam at that time. He would also take an active part in this seminar. This seminar proved very beneficial and fruitful for the younger generation in the sense that they had the opportunity to enjoy the blessed company of Hadrat Ch Sahib. One of those young men Mr. Rafiq Ahmad Hayat is Amir Jamat of England. His brother Mr. Laique Ahmad Hayat was also a member of this class. The list of the students who participated in this seminar is endless. By the grace of Allah all of them are serving in the Jamat in various capacities.

A separate class was organized for the girls under the supervision of Lajna Imaillah (women's wing of Ahmadiyya jamat). Mrs. Salam, President Lajna Imaillah, and her team did a tremendous job to make this program a success. By the grace of Allah the girls trained and educated by them are engaged in the service of Jamat. The services rendered by Mrs. Salam and her active team in shielding Ahmadi girls from the bad influence of Western Culture, will be inscribed in golden letters in the annals of the Jamat. It is my desire that if she can spare time she should produce a treatise highlighting the services of her team and also giving her full introduction. This would provide an occasion for people to pray for her.

The second part of the program was to write and produce books for the children. I started this work with the publication of the Muslim Prayer Book. By the grace of Allah it became very popular among the people and was translated into many languages.

I wrote another book entitled 'Islam: My Religion' which was also a great success and till now four

editions of the book have been published. Mr. Chaudhary Rasheed Ahmad performed a painstaking job in preparing the books for children. These books were greatly liked by the people.

Hadrat Ch. Zafarullah Khan Sahib translated 'Shamail Tirmazi' into English under the title 'The Prophet At Home' which was published by the Jamat of England. This book was a valuable gift for the young. This has also seen two or three editions. Hadrat Chaudhary Sahib translated 'Riyad-us-Saleheen' (The Traditions of The Holy Prophet) under the name 'Wisdom of the Holy Prophet'. This book enabled the younger generation to have acquaintance with the Hadith and learn some Hadith by heart.

The third part of the program was to train the younger generation in declamation. So it was decided that in the monthly meetings of the Jamat at least one youth should deliver a speech on a particular topic. It was also agreed that an annual declamation contest should be organized. These contests continued to be held successfully under the name 'The London Mosque Declamation Contest.' The successful speakers were awarded shields and trophies by the well-off members of the Jamat. This practice continued for many years and the youth of the Jamat always participated in these contests with great enthusiasm. The youth, from Gillingham, Birmingham and Bradford besides London, also participated in this contest. These contests proved very successful not only in producing research works on various topics but in also providing the Jamat with best of the speakers who are still very active in the field of Tabligh by the grace of Allah. Mr.

Mansoor Ahmad Shah rendered valuable services for this program in the capacity of its secretary.

The fourth part of the program was to instill the spirit of Tabligh in the young generation. For this purpose every year a few days were set aside for Tabligh throughout England.

The first Tabligh Day, under this program, was observed on 17th March 1968. On this day young men and elderly people of all the Jamats gathered in their respective zones. Placards on different Islamic topics had been prepared beforehand and pamphlets on the topics 'Islam – A Religion of Piece' & 'Introduction of Islam' had been printed in thousands of numbers. After congregational silent prayers, all Ahmadies, young and old, men and women, spread out in their localities, conveyed the message of Islam through out the day, returned to their respective centers in the evening and submitted their reports.

The BBC radio broadcast the news of our Tabligh Day. Similarly 'The Times' and local newspapers not only carried the news of Tabligh Day but also published the photographs of men and women engaged in Tabligh. Later this practice was continued on a permanent basis which resulted in not only new converts but also helped in conveying the message of Islam to a larger section of the society. Another important benefit of this day was that it generated a great enthusiasm for Tabligh among the members of Jamat. They felt a need to enhance their knowledge about Islam by deeply studying and pondering over the Holy Quran. In short, by the grace of Allah the Tabligh Days proved immensely successful and fruitful. In organizing these Tabligh Days many of the members

of the Jamat worked hard day and night. I am mentioning the names of only a few so that the readers remember them in their prayers. They are Mr. Ghulam Ahmad Chughtai, Mr. A.R Chaudhary, Mr. Abdul Aziz Din Sahib, Mr. Khawaja Bashir Ahmad Sahib, Mr. Dawood Ahmad Gulzar Sahib, Mr. Chaudhary Rasheed Ahmad Sahib, Mr. Mohammad Nazim Khan Ghouri Sahib, Mr. Malik Abdul Aziz Sahib, Mr. Maulvi Abdul Rahman Sahib, Mr. Syed Iqbal Shah Sahib, Mr. Dr. Saeed Ahmad Sahib, Mrs. Salma Saeed Sahiba of York Shire, Mr. Qamaruddin Amini Sahib of York Shire, Mr. Mohammad Ayoob Sahib of Glasgow, Mr. Ilyas Khan Sahib of Dillingham and all of his brothers, Mr. Mirza Fazal Kareem Sahib, Mr. Dr. Wali Ahmad Shah Sahib, Mr. Mansoor Ahmad Shah Sahib, Mr. Basheer Ahmad Hayat Sahib, Mr. Chaudhary Mansoor Sahib B.T and Mr. Rafiq Ahmad Sahib Hayat.

There are still many others whose names I am not able to recollect at present. May Allah rain His grace and blessings upon them and accept there services. آمین.

For the education and Tarbiyyat of the Jamaat another important program in the form of a Taleem ul Quran Class was started under the instructions of Hadhrat Chaudhry Zafrulla Khan. Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib, some other missionaries and I used to address this class every fortnight. The students were also encouraged to ask questions. A very large number of Ahmadies attended the class and this class successfully continued for many years.

I consider it necessary to make a mention of the fact that during my tenure as Imam Masjid & Missionary In-charge Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib greatly

contributed in the education & Trabiyat of Jamat of England. In spite of his advanced age, Chaudhry Sahib was very punctual and regular in attending the Tarbiyyati Class. He would address meetings of the Jamaat and at my request also delivered the Friday sermon on many occasions. He would also accompany me on my tours of various Jamaats and discharged responsibilities in connection with the education and Tarbiyyat of the Jamaat in a very skillful manner. I cannot recall a single occasion when I requested him for any job for the Jamaat and he turned down my request. He would share with me the joys and sorrows pertaining to the Jamat and remained actively engaged in solving problems confronting any member of the Jamat. He would visit the houses of the members of Jamat at their invitation and discussed educational and Tarbiyyati matters in detail. It would not be an exaggeration if I would say that throughout the period, he was based in London, and that covered the major part of my services as Imam, the task of education and Tarbiyyat of the Jamat could not have successfully been carried out without his advice, help and active co-operation. The Jamat of England was extremely fortunate in having a great, sympathetic, sincere and devout teacher in the person of Hadrat Ch. Sahib. O Allah! Elevate the station of Hadrat Ch Sahib in heaven for he was Thy ardent and truthful devotee. Every moment of his life was dedicated to the service of Thy people. For Thy sake, though he was well off, yet he led a life of poverty; though he was great, yet he conducted himself most humbly. He was a faithful and complete follower of Thy Prophet Hadrat Mohammad s.a.w and his servant The Promised Massiah a.s. O

Allah! He was always engaged in prayers. He always prayed for us. So enable us to pray for him.

Construction of a New Mission House in England

In 1964 I submitted a proposal to the center with regard to the construction of a beautiful and spacious Mission House after demolishing the then existing structure at 61-63 Melrose Road owned by the Jamat. I received a reply from the center in the affirmative provided that I could arrange the required amount as a loan payable in easy installments. A construction committee was constituted consisting of the following members:

I, Bashir Ahmad Rafiq (President Committee)
Mr. Abdul Aziz Din Sahib Moulvi Abdul Rehman Sahib

The committee consulted many finance companies for a loan. At last a company agreed to advance the required amount on the condition that they would execute the construction of the building as per our approved plan and the center would repay the loan over the next 25 years in installments. Now the procedure for getting the approval of the construction plan was started. Hadrat Khalifatul Masih III kindly gave his approval for the plan. But at the time of signing the agreement the said company, without any prior notice, refused to provide the amount and our hectic efforts to win them over proved futile. The very next day, when I got the Company's refusal letter Hadrat Chaudhary Zafarullah Khan Sahib arrived in London from Holland and was my guest. During our talk at dinner I mentioned the matter of the company's refusal to provide the amount and expressed my sadness over the

loss of one year of construction committee and our unfulfilled dreams of having a spacious, beautiful and comfortable Mission House. Hadrat Chaudhary Sahib kept silent over this. The next week Hadrat Chaudhary Sahib again arrived in London and was my guest. At dinner Chaudhary Sahib proposed to me that if the center agrees, he was ready to arrange the required amount on the same conditions upon which it was to be provided to the construction committee. At once I happily told him what else we needed. I asked Chaudhary Sahib that if his offer was firm I would write immediately to Hudur for approval. At this Chaudhary Sahib said, "Of course you may write." So I wrote to Hudur and Hudur graciously accepted Chaudhary Sahib's offer. Thus it was agreed that Hadrat Chaudhary Sahib would provide the amount for the construction of Mission House and the center would repay the amount within twenty five years after the completion of the construction. The cost of construction was estimated at one lakh Pounds at that time. The plan of the construction was submitted to Hudur and the work was started after Hudur's approval. When the construction was completed, the next step was to furnish the Mission House with new furniture, curtains and other interior decorations. As per the agreement Chaudhary Sahib was responsible only for the construction of the Mission House. Anyhow, I requested Chaudhary Sahib to help us in arranging the required amount to purchase the furniture and other items. Chaudhary Sahib said it was not included in the agreement but he accepted our request.

After the completion of construction and the interior designing of the Mission House I submitted the draft of the agreement to Hadrat Chaudhary Sahib under the instructions of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih III. He said he

would sign the agreement the next week after thoroughly going through it. I was graciously authorized by Hudur to sign the agreement on behalf of Markaz. The next week Hadrat Chaudhary Sahib arrived from Holland and said he had studied the agreement and was ready to sign it. I said I would convene the meeting of the executive committee the next day and the agreement would be signed in that meeting. The next day early in the morning Hadrat Chaudhary Sahib came to me and said,

“I pondered over this agreement throughout the night and felt some kind of uneasiness in my mind. I asked myself: Zafarullah Khan what ever you have got is a great favor of Allah upon you. You have brought nothing from your home. When Allah did not impose any conditions while bestowing wealth upon you, to which extent are you justified in laying conditions while sacrificing some portion of that wealth in the cause of Allah? You can express your gratitude and thankfulness to Allah only by presenting the whole amount willingly and whole heartedly in the cause of Allah.”

He said further:

“I have torn up the agreement. May the new Mission House bring blessings to the Jamat. There is only one condition to this deal; it should not be made public during my lifetime that I have provided the entire amount incurred in the construction of the Mission House . This is only a gift from me to the Jamat.”



Chapter – IV

The Blessed Period Of The Third Khilafat

In 1945, for the first time in my life, when I was a student at the T.I. High School in Qadian I had the privilege of having an audience with Hadhrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad. However, from the early part of 1949 when I was in my first year at T.I. College in Lahore, a strong, loving and benevolent relationship began. Hudur was then the Principal of the College and in those days, the T.I. College was at its zenith. Due to Hudur's excellent administration, in many ways, the T.I. College had excelled all other colleges in Lahore.

I was the Imam of the London Mosque when Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II passed away in 1965. Thousands of miles away from the Centre, all Ahmadis in Britain, active in their prayers, were impatiently waiting to hear who had been elected the third Khalifa. Engrossed in these thoughts many Ahmadis had assembled in the Mission House. A British Muslim, Bilal Nuttall, approached me and told me that he knew who the next Khalifa would be. I was very surprised and asked him how he knew ahead of the election who the new Khalifa would be. Bilal Nuttall gave me a photograph that he had in his hand and in a choking voice said:

“Here is a photograph of Sahibzada Nasir Ahmad, taken in the London Mosque that he gave me. In those days, he was up at Oxford for his studies. I had spent a period very close to him and I found him to be God

fearing, well mannered and an ardent lover of the Holy Prophet. After my first glimpse at the Sahibzada I have always been absolutely certain that he deserved to occupy the exalted position and that the Jamat would surely elect him.”

Bilal Nuttall was still with me when we received a telegram from the Centre telling us that Hadhrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad had been elected as the third Khalifa. Thus an English Ahmadi through his farsightedness recognized in Hudur’s youth a great man who was to fulfill a monumental task in future. He was a witness that Hudur was a chaste, pious and God-fearing person. He was also a witness that Hudur was an arch lover of the Holy Prophet of Islam.

Many members of the family of the Promised Messiah had a close relationship with a British farming family in Devonshire (England) This family was a well-to-do one and had a large agricultural estate. While Hudur was a student at Oxford, along with Mirza Muzaffar Ahmad, in a most unceremonious way, he would often spend his holidays at the farm. Once, along with Chaudhry Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, I also spent two or three days in Devonshire. All the old tales, concerning the times the grandsons of the Promised Messiah spent at the farm, formed the subject of our discussion.

During the course of our conversation, I asked an old lady of the family how Mirza Nasir Ahmad Sahib spent his days at the farm. She pointed to the room where Hudur stayed and said that during his stay whenever she passed in front of his room she could hear a fascinating hum. She said that she would often stand next to the window and hear what was being recited. Once she asked

Mirza Nasir Ahmad what he recited every morning without fail. Hudur replied that he recited a portion of the Holy Quran. She also said that once at the evening meals Hadrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad Sahib and other grandsons of the Promised Messiah talked about their future plans. When it was Hudur's turn, he said:

“I intend to serve the Islamic faith and I am determined to devote all my life for this purpose. I have no other desire or ambition and I am certainly not inclined towards worldly affairs.”

Normally the British, particularly the Christian British, do not have a strong inclination towards religion. She admitted that on hearing this discussion she said:

“What a waste of time.”

She continued:

“Now that I see he is the Head of the Jamat, I feel sorry that I let such a remark escape from my lips. Now indeed, he has been granted the kind of life that he had wished for”

She further said:

“Even in his youth he was very shy and a very affectionate person. During his holidays, he would assemble children, give them chocolates out of his pocket and feel very pleased. He would only eat Halal meat and as Halal meat was not easy to come by he would slaughter a chicken with his own hand.”

She showed me a photograph in which Hudur could be seen slaughtering a chicken.

In 1967 for the first time after his ascension to the throne of Khilafat I saw Hudur in Copenhagen, where he had arrived for the inauguration of the Ahmadiyya Mosque. I also reached Copenhagen to attend the ceremony. When I cast my eyes on Hudur's radiant countenance, I had a very strange sensation. With great compassion, Hudur embraced me and allowed me to stay with him for a while and showered great affection on me. A few days later, when Hudur came to England, all of us in the British Jamat were beside ourselves with joy. At Heathrow Airport, for his reception, a modest stage had been arranged and a microphone had also been provided. On Hudur's arrival, the Queen's Building at the Heathrow Airport resounded with slogans of 'Allah-O-Akbar'. I asked Hudur if he would like to address the audience but he said that he was impatient to meet other Ahmadis. Hudur said speeches may be made later on but first he would shake hands with all those who were present. Hudur shook hand with all of Ahmadis who had gathered. He even embraced some of them. Then Hudur arrived in Mission House.

Hudur stayed at the Mission House and I shifted to the adjoining building at 61 Melrose Road. That building, at that time, was not in a good shape. Parts of it were covered in dust and smelt of fresh paint. I would normally remain in the other building at Hudur's disposal. I would return to my flat late at night. Once, when I got home in the evening my wife told me that due to the stink of the fresh paint and the presence of dust, our eldest daughter Amat ul Jameel had suffered a severe attack of Asthma. When the doctor came to see her, the child was moved to a Hospital at his advice. I rushed to the hospital and found that my daughter was very weak and kept in an oxygen

tent. The doctor on duty was far from pleased with her condition and said that she might not survive the attack. He asked me to pray. When I got back home, I found Hudur had retired to his residence after leading the Isha prayer. I went to Hudur and told him about Jamila's sickness and requested Hudur, in a very choking and tearful voice, to pray for her. Hudur asked me not to worry and said he would pray and also advised me to pray. He assured me that Allah would grant Jameela a speedy recovery.

I reached home with a heavy heart, and remained engaged in deep supplications. I could not sleep a wink and when I reached the mosque for the Fajr prayers, Hudur told me that he had prayed fervently throughout the night for Jameela. A little while later Hadrat Mansoorah Begum Sahiba called me and told me that Hudur remained restless throughout the night and prayed for Jameela. Then she asked me to go to the hospital and inform her about Jameela's condition. When I arrived at the hospital, I saw a great sign of the acceptance of prayers. Jameela was no longer in an oxygen tent but was sitting happily in an armchair. The doctor told me that after I had left there was an extraordinary recovery and now she was out of danger.

After a few days Jameela came back home. This was a great sign of acceptance of Hudur's prayers which changed the condition of Jamila overnight and, instead of facing death she was gifted with a new life.

At every step, during this tour, the British Jamat witnessed signs of the acceptance of Hudur's prayers. While in Scotland, Hudur asked a devout Ahmadi, Muhammad Ayub, who was the president of the Jamat, how many children he had. He answered that he had three daughters. Hudur smiled and said:

“It is high time you had a son.”

In a despondent manner, Mr Ayub said that he could no longer hope for a son.

In a very firm tone, Hudur told him that it was a sin to be despondent and that it did not behove a believer to be pessimistic about God’s mercy. Then Hudur promised to pray for him and said that Allah would surely bless him with a son as a result of his prayers. A little later Mr Ayub wrote to Hudur that his wife was pregnant and asked him to pray that they might be blessed with a son. In reply, Hudur assured him that Allah would grant him a son and asked him to name the child ‘Ibrahim’. This letter from Hudur was written five or six months prior to the birth of the baby. In fact, Mr Ayub brought the letter to me. I congratulated him. On the due date, a son was born and he was named ‘Ibrahim’ and we witnessed a grand sign of fulfillment of Hudur’s prayers.

Hudur was very frugal in his meals. He often said that the root cause of ill health is over-indulgence. He related that once, when he was a guest of a zamindar (landowner), at meals he was served a number of chapattis (flat bread) with some curry. As was his habit, he ate very little. The landowner’s wife was watching him from behind a curtain and she said:

“Mian Sahib you have eaten very little today.”

I was privileged to be included in Hudur’s entourage in seven of his tours to Europe and America. While in America, I served him as his Private Secretary. During his tours to Europe I had also the honor to drive Hudur’s car.

For a long time I have been in the habit of drinking coffee every morning at 11 a.m. Almost exactly at that

hour, I hanker after coffee. Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib was aware of this habit of mine. When Hudur toured Europe in 1967, which included a visit to Scotland, I was asked to drive his car. Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib traveled with Hudur. Before leaving London, in a light sarcastic manner, Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib said to me:

“How will you manage as Hudur will not stop for coffee at 11 o’clock?”

I said that God does arrange for procuring what one is habituated to. Chaudhry Sahib laughed at my response. On our way from London to Scotland, a quarter of an hour before 11 o’clock I saw a signboard for ‘Services’. I slowed down and signaled for turning left. Hudur enquired why I had done so. I said that right ahead were Services where the toilets are neat and clean, so we could make a stop for a while. We could make use of the washing facilities and stretch our legs. Hudur liked the idea and said that he himself wanted to get out of the car and relieve himself. When the car came to a stop and Hudur stepped out, Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib chuckled a bit. He said to me:

“Somehow you have managed to stop for your coffee at 11 o’clock!”

I also laughed. On enquiry, Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib told Hudur that I was in the habit of drinking coffee at 11 o’clock. He also told him of our conversation prior to leaving London. Hudur was also amused. For me a bonus arose from that incident. From then on, a few minutes before 11 o’clock Hudur would say to me:

“Imam Rafiq, make a stop at some restaurant. It is time for your coffee.”

A MEMOIR

In 1970, when I was appointed as Hudur's Private Secretary, at exactly 11 o'clock, even while busy reading his mail, he would say:

"You can go and have a cup of coffee. I will continue reading the mail."

On the very first day of my appointment as Private Secretary at Rabwah Hudur said to me:

"I want you to be my driver. While you are driving I remain at ease."

Therefore, during a period of one and a half years, while I was Hudur's Private Secretary at Rabwah I had the honor of driving his car. During that period, on one occasion, while I was driving Hudur's car Hadhrat Dr. Mirza Munawwar Ahmad was seated in the front next to me. As usual, Hudur and Begum Sahiba occupied the rear seat.

Mian Munawwar pointed out to me that the exterior of the car was covered with dust and that I should take care to see that it is clean. Hudur did not like this comment and addressing Mian Sahib, in a voice a little louder than usual, he said :

"Munawwar! It is a favor of the Imam Sahib that he drives my car. In fact, he is not a driver but my Private Secretary. Cleaning the car is not his responsibility. Other people are employed for this purpose."

That evening when we went out for a walk, Hudur expressed his sorrow over what Mian Munawwar Ahmad Sahib had said.

In 1971, when for the second time Hudur sent me to England as Imam of the London Mosque and Missionary in Charge, out of the compassion of his heart he said to me:

“As you are my Private Secretary, I do not really wish to send you to England. However, many of the British Jamat have requested me to post you back to England. I am, therefore, asking you to go to England unwillingly.”

Two days before my departure Hudur had marquees erected in his own compound and threw a party for me to which, apart from members of the family of the Promised Messiah, some other dignitaries such as Nazirs and Wakeels were invited. For me this was the greatest tribute of my life.

While I was his Private Secretary at Rabwah, with great hesitation, I said to Hudur that I wished to invite him and Begum Sahiba for a meal at my house, but I was fully aware of my station. Hudur replied instantly:

“Why not? We will come to your house for a meal whenever you like.”

I was thrilled and a few days later after making the necessary arrangements, I invited Hudur, Begum Sahiba and some of their children for a meal at my house. Hudur and the members of his family came along. My parents, a sister and her children were staying with me and they too participated in the get-together. Hudur stayed until late at night and held a discussion on various subjects.

Although my residence was only a few paces from my office, as soon as I assumed charge, Hudur kindly told me that my midday meal would be sent to me from his residence. This routine remained in force for a period of eighteen months. At the exact time fixed for lunch my meal would be sent to my office. Once or twice, I humbly submitted that my house was very close to my office and there was really no need for my meal to be sent from

Hudur's residence. However, Hudur did not agree and until the day I left for England this practice continued.

It is totally impossible for me to record the never-ending favors and love that I was received during those days.

I have seen Hudur from close quarters and always found him to be God fearing, an ardent lover of God and an extremely spiritual man. There was no dualism in his character. He practiced what he professed. He was a very shy person and habitually overlooked the faults of others. He never kept a grievance or rancour in his heart. Even when he got cross, he soon forgave. Throughout the time that I worked with him, his favors were showered upon me continuously. He would take care of my smallest needs. He would address me as 'Imam Rafiq' in an affectionate manner. In all his European and American tours, he included me in his entourage. While meeting Heads of State and other important political figures, he would always keep me with him. The treatment of Hadhrat Mansoorah Begum Sahiba was of the same pattern. Her treatment to me was that of a kind and benevolent mother.

In April 1987, covering the period that I had the privilege to be close to Chaudhry Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, I wrote a book entitled 'Hadhrat Chaudhry Muhammad Zafrulla Khan - A Few Remembrances'. The book had been printed but I had only received a few copies. The remaining copies were still in the press when the Government of Pakistan confiscated all copies and instructed that, along with me, the owner of the printing press and some members of his staff should have proceedings started against them and also that an F.I.R (First Information Report) should be registered against all. Accordingly, the owner of the printing press and four of

his staff, all of them non-Ahmadis, were arrested. Before I could be arrested, I had reached England.

On arrival in England, Huzoor appointed me as Additional Wakeel ut Tasneef and permitted me to send for my wife and children. Two weeks later, they also arrived in England.

The major problem that confronted us in England was that of accommodation. There was no room in Islamabad and the Jamat had no other residential accommodation at their disposal. Thus I purchased a flat quite close to the Mosque. I sold the comfortable and beautiful house that I had built for myself in Rabwah and for the second time all of us started living together in England.

Since, in the past I had served as Wakeel ut Tasneef in Rabwah and had gained some experience in that line, I did not therefore have any difficulty in assuming responsibility of the work assigned to me in England. Moreover, at every step Huzoor's supervision and guidance was available to me.

A little later Huzoor kindly appointed me the Chairman of the Board of 'Review of Religions'. While in Rabwah, I had edited this famous magazine for a period of two years. At this time Mr. Basheer Ahmad Orchard was its editor. By the Grace of Allah, in that capacity I discharged my responsibilities for a long period. Since Mr Orchard, and I were old friends and were familiar with each other's temperament, there did not surface any difficulty between us in managing the affairs of 'The Review of Religions'. Mr Orchard was a saintly person; he was simple in his demeanour and had attained a very high order in the spiritual world. He was absolutely saturated in the love for Islam and Ahmadiyyat. There was never any

disparity between what he said and what he did. He lived the life of a Sufi. To gain the pleasure of Allah, as a Moosi, he had bequeathed to the Jamat one third of whatever he left behind. During his entire life, he always paid to the Jamat one third of his income. He had strictly limited his own needs. He was extremely brief in his conversation. He strictly followed the principle - speak less, eat less and to sleep less. I never heard him indulge in backbiting. He was sympathetic to and well-wisher of everyone – be he a stranger or acquaintance. While in his company one felt a strong magnetic field, which invariably left on one a special kind of spiritual impact. May Allah grant him a high station in Heaven. Amen. آمين.

Professor Mrs Amat ul Majeed Chaudhry had a substantial role in the management of the ‘Review of Religions’ in England. She assisted Mr Orchard and me with great devotion and hard work. She was responsible for printing, proof reading, dispatch and other associated odd jobs. She discharged her duties diligently and admirably.

A little later, Huzoor graciously appointed me a Member of the Board of Directors of ‘Al Shirkat tul Al Islamia Ltd.’ and also entrusted me with the care of the MTA Department. In those days, MTA used to be telecast for a few hours a day through a Russian satellite. By the grace of Allah, I was able to run this department in the best possible manner. From the very beginning, the Almighty had granted MTA many hard working and selfless volunteers. Huzoor’s prayers and their extreme hard work made MTA a thumping success. Today it has assumed the shape of a great shady tree.

At this point, I want to make a mention of some friends who are no longer with us. Mr Bashir Ahmad

Hayat, a very sincere, devoted and hardworking member, worked closely with me throughout the period that I was Imam. He left a very pleasant impression on me. He had a simple temperament and rendered selfless service. He had a sympathetic and philanthropic nature. May Allah forgive him. Amen.

During this period, I also had close relationship with Mr. Mubarak Ahmad Saqi for over a quarter of a century. He was a very simple person and worked tirelessly. He was always cheerful and did not ever cause harm to anybody. We were very close to and fond of each other.

I had another two friends whom I can never afford to forget. They were Chaudhary Hidayat Ullah Bangvi and Mr Nazir Ahmad Dar. Both these gentlemen, having retired from very senior positions, remained wholeheartedly engaged in the service of the Jamat throughout the period of my Imamate. For a long while Chaudhary Hidayat Ullah Bangvi served as First Secretary in the Pakistan Embassy in London. Mr Nazir Ahmad Dar had served as an Inspector General of Police in Tanzania, and had been awarded by the British Government for his outstanding services.

I was the Imam of the London Mosque when Chaudhary Hidayat Ullah Bangvi Sahib was first posted as Second Secretary in the Pakistan Embassy. He came to my office to see me in my office. During this very first meeting, I was profoundly impressed by his devotion, sincerity, humility and deep love for the Jamat. At the very first meeting, he made an offer to serve the Jamat in every way. Soon he would spend all his spare time in the Mission House.

Mr. Bangwi Sahib served the Jamat in various capacities and soon, as a result of his pleasant demeanour, willingness to help others and humility, he created a vast circle of friends for himself. I was particularly impressed to find him in complete harmony with what he did and what he said. He always spoke the truth unambiguously. Although he had served in very high positions, he exhibited such high standards of obedience as could hardly be found anywhere else.

We were very fond of each other and our relationship developed to a stage where we could be real brothers. May Allah grant him an exalted position in Paradise. Amen.

Mr Nazir Ahmad Dar was a repository of superb qualities. He always discharged his responsibility towards his friends. He was always willing to serve others. He was always found to be a well-wisher of all. He adhered to his principles so meticulously that very often some people were offended. However, everyone knew that his heart was filled with love for all. Until the very last day of his life, he continued to serve the Jamat. With me he had a special relationship of love, affection and sincerity. As Imam, I worked very closely with him for a long time. He was a perfect example of obedience. Occasionally, he would take a stand but whenever I said anything in my position as the Imam, he would agree and never deviated even slightly from the dictates of obedience.

Both these gentlemen were blessed with the opportunities of being close to the Khulfa of Ahmadiyyat. They presented an excellent example of love and devotion for the Khulfa.

Now such personalities are rarely to be seen but we cannot possibly forget them even if we try.

Hadhrat Syed Iqbal Shah was another saintly person with the temperament of a Sufi who left a very deep and indelible impression on me. I learnt a lot from him. He devoted the remaining days of his life for the service of the Jamat. He would regularly turn up at the Mission House and work in an office next to mine. I have never seen another meek and humble person like him. It appeared that one could see an angel in his person. He would continuously remain engaged in supplications. He was extremely honest and deeply conscious of his duty. He died suddenly and the books of account, which he was responsible for keeping, were balanced to the last penny.

He was extremely kind to me and dealt with me with love and sincerity. I was of the age of his children but merely because I was the Imam, he showed such great respect to me that I would be put to shame. I would often protest and say that I was in need of his prayers. He was a virtuous example for me to follow. May Allah shower His blessings upon him in abundance. Amen.

His sons Syed Wali Ahmad Shah and Syed Mansoor Shah, following in the footsteps of their father, hold me dear and are always extremely kind to me. I am deeply indebted to both the brothers. In the early days of my Imamatus it was Mr Daood Ahmad Gulzar who left no stone unturned, day and night, in the service of the Jamat. After attending to his personal business, he would spend all the remaining time in serving the Jamat. He was an extremely chaste, virtuous and pious young man who was always engrossed in deep supplications. He was the son of Hadhrat Moulvi Qudrat Ullah Sanori, a Companion of the Promised Messiah^{a.s}. He tried his best to follow in his father's footsteps. May Allah grant him an exalted station in heaven. Amen.

Apart from the few friends who have passed away and whom I have mentioned above, there are very many others who are still alive and who have worked with me very closely and rendered meritorious services. May Allah shower His blessings on all of them. Amen.

Attack of Diabetes

Suddenly in 1970, I began to feel very thirsty and my tongue seemed as dry as a twig. In order to relieve my bladder during the night, I had to get up several times. Once, I mentioned this problem to Hadhrat Chaudhry Zafrulla Khan and he asked me to see a doctor at once. My doctor sent me to a Hospital for tests of blood etc. Some tests were carried out after an intake of glucose. I was asked to return in a couple of days. When I met the specialist, he told me that I had become a diabetic. I felt as if a sentence of death had been pronounced on me and for a few moments, I was completely stunned. The Doctor asked me not to worry and said that, with proper care and daily exercise, this problem can be brought under control. He gave me detailed instructions.

When I got back home, I found Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib waiting for me. I told him that I had some good news and some bad news and asked him which one he wanted to hear first. Chaudhary Sahib replied, "Whichever you prefer to tell me first" The good news, I said, was that we were now associates; and the bad news, I said, was that I had become a diabetic. Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib asked me not to be too concerned as he had been a diabetic for forty years.

He said:

"Diabetes is like a stubborn horse. If the rider takes necessary care and remains on his

guard, he can really enjoy riding a stubborn horse. However, if the rider is not attentive the horse will rebel and throw him on the ground. If Diabetes remains under control, one's daily life can continue normally. Otherwise, it can cause very hazardous results. Because of this sickness, the amount of sugar in the blood increases and that can be damaging. As the blood circulates throughout the body, other organs can be affected. When sugar in the blood exceeds the normal level, different organs can be affected. Diabetes can lead to loss of sight, loss of teeth and a weakness of heart. To control diabetes it is necessary to take three very important precautions. First: regular medical checkups and strictly following medical advice. Second: daily exercise, for example, a brisk walk for two or two and a half miles. Third: due care in the intake of food and a total ban on those items of food prohibited by the Doctor. On a regular basis, I consult Dr. Jocelyn who is one of the topmost specialists in diabetes. Then, I faithfully follow his advice.

Once when I visited him, after a thorough examination, he told me that all was well. Then he said that as far as possible I should exercise care in some other matters such as, the excessive use of coffee. I told him that I drink eleven mugs of coffee every day and I had, to a degree, become addicted to coffee. However, from that moment, I said, I would give up drinking coffee altogether. The Doctor said that this sudden move may not be possible and that I should reduce the intake gradually. When I came down the stairs I made up

my mind not to touch coffee and in the last fifteen or twenty years I have not even touched coffee.”

After he had finished giving me detailed instructions, I expressed my doubt if I would be able to exercise such restraint. At that point, Chaudhry Sahib related an interesting story.

He said:

“When I was the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, I suddenly received a call from the Prime Minister’s house telling me that the Prime Minister, Khwaja Nazim-ud-Deen, needed my presence immediately. When I called on him, he was in his study. He asked me to sit down and said; “After examination, the doctors have discovered that I have become a diabetic. I thought it best to seek your advice, as you have been able to bring your diabetes under control. So please advise me.” In about three quarters of an hour, in great detail I told him how to conduct his life and how to be careful in his diet. I even told him what to eat and what not to eat. For a while, Khwaja Sahib kept completely silent.”

Then he said;

“I have listened to your advice with great care and attention and I have noted how I should conduct my life. However, I regret that I will not be able to follow this. It is impossible for me to bring about such a big change in my eating habits.”

Looking at me Chaudhry Sahib said:

“I hope you will not say what the Khwaja Sahib said i.e. ‘I have listened to your advice with

great attention but I regret I will not be able to act in accordance with it.”

Then Chaudhry Sahib referred to the commands in the Holy Quran about the use of only Halal and Tayyab (legitimate and chaste) items of food.

He said:

“We all know what ‘Halal’ means but what is meant by Tayyab? Use of sugar, for example is Halal but for Diabetics it is not Tayyab. The Holy Quran, which is a book of great perception and wisdom, has made clear that Halal items may be consumed by everyone, but since some items of food are not Tayyab for some, they should abstain from their use. Those Diabetics who order their lives in accordance with medical advice normally live long lives as their diet becomes balanced.”

Since Chaudhry Sahib lived to be 93 years old, perhaps the secret of his long life was that he was most careful in what he ate. In any case, overeating is injurious to health and obesity is a disease in itself. An early morning brisk walk is most helpful for Diabetics. A two-mile brisk walk can produce great beneficial results. The following homeopathic medicines brought me immense relief;

Natrum Sulph 200 once a week, Natrum Sulph 30 twice a day. Along with these, use of Kali Phos is also helpful. Eating Roti (backed bread) made of gram flour is also useful.

Dr. Abdus Salam
Some Reminiscences

When I reached London in the early part of 1959, Dr. Abdus Salam lived in Putney, about a mile and a half from the Fazl Mosque. At that time he was serving as a Professor of Theoretical Physics at Imperial College, London. I had had the opportunity to meet him whenever he visited the London Mosque. He occupied a very high position and I was a mere young Missionary. He would often invite Hadhrat Chaudhry Zafrulla Khan Sahib and some other friends for breakfast at his house. It was always an informal affair and I too would be invited on such occasions. Along with other admirers, I would also benefit from his discourse. Poetry, literature and current events would normally form subjects of discussion on such occasions. Doctor Sahib would be the sole and spirit in such assemblies. Later on, when Hadhrat Chaudhry Muhammad Zafrullah Khan Sahib settled in London permanently, Dr. Sahib would often invite him for breakfast at his house. He would also send invitation to me on such occasions.

Allah had blessed Dr. Sahib with an amazing brain conducive to conducting scientific research. Apart from that, he also evinced a great deal of interest in Urdu and Persian poetry. He was a great admirer of 'Hafiz' the famous Persian poet. In partifular, he was a great admirer of 'Hafiz', the famous Persian poet. He had many of his verses, on the tip of his tongue which he would recite on appropriate occasions. He dearly loved 'Maulana Room' and had memorised many of his verses. He would also

recite the verses of the Promised Massiah^{a.s} during his discussions to illustrate his point of view. Doctor Salam adored Hadhrat Chaudhry Muhammad Zafrulla Khan and always consulted him, even about his personal and private matters. He would act in accordance with the advice tendered.

Shortly after my arrival in London, his father, Hadhrat Chaudhry Muhammad Hussain, also came over to London. Naturally, Doctor Sahib was devoted to his esteemed father and held him in very high regard. Famous politicians and eminent scientists who came to meet him were always introduced to his father. When it was arranged for Doctor Sahib to meet the Duke of Edinburgh he took his father along with him and introduced him to The Duke.

Once he came to the Mission House and said to me that his father was getting bored sitting alone in the house. He wondered if it would be in order for him to drop his father at the Mission House in the morning and collect him again in the evening on his way back from the college. He thought that in this way his father would remain involved and would have an opportunity to meet other Ahmadi friends.

I replied:

“It would give me a great pleasure to have your father at the Mission House. In this way the Jamat will benefit from him in the field of Tarbiyyat.”

Therefore, Chaudhry Muhammad Hussain started visiting the Mission House every day. He would spend a lot of time with me in my office discussing various educational and Tarbiyyati matters. Once he asked me to pray that his son may be awarded the Nobel Prize.

I said:

“You yourself are an extremely pious person. Therefore, compared with me, your prayers will have a ready acceptance.”

I promised to pray myself and I promised to request some others to pray for him. Some days later I saw a dream in which I heard somebody telling me:

“Dr. Salam will surely be awarded the Nobel Prize. He is still very young whereas much older scientists are waiting in the queue. They will be awarded the prize first and then it will be Dr. Salam’s turn.”

The next day I related this dream to Chaudhry Muhammad Hussain. The following day when Dr. Salaam came to the Mission House to fetch his father he wanted to hear the dream from me directly; I recounted the dream to him.

He said:

“It is strange that a few days ago someone close to the Nobel Prize Committee said the same thing to me.”

Dr. Salam used to be among the first persons to reach the Mosque for Friday prayer and he normally sat in the front row immediately behind the Imam. While I delivered my sermon, Dr. Salam would make certain notes in his notebook. One day, I said to him jokingly:

“Perhaps you like my sermons so much that every now and then you take notes.”

Doctor Sahib burst out in a spontaneous laughter and said:

“The truth is that every now and then, in my mind I receive an electrical impulse

which is often brilliant and concerns some scientific issues. I make an immediate note so that in the future they would form the basis of my research. Unless I make a note of them immediately, there is a danger of them being lost.”

This was his routine day and night. Even while he was eating, he would suddenly open his notebook and write something in it. He would then resume the conversation in which he was engaged.

He was an ardent lover of Ahmadiyyat and had a great sense of honour for it. In 1974 when the Pakistan National Assembly unanimously resolved that Ahmadis were non-Muslims, Dr. Salam was the Chief Scientific Advisor to the Government of Pakistan holding the rank of a Minister. When he heard the terrible news, he came to the Mission House and showed Hadhrat Chaudhry Zafrulla Khan a letter of resignation that he took out of his pocket. He said:

“How can I serve a government that has, exceeding all limits, taken an unjust and shameful decision?”

Dr. Salam was deeply shocked when General Zia promulgated the notorious ordinance prohibiting Ahmadis from carrying out Islamic injunctions. After a lapse of some time, I asked him if he had met General Zia ul Haq after the promulgation of the Ordinance. He said he had met him and told me in some detail what had transpired during that meeting.

He said:

“When I was at Trieste I received repeated calls from General Zia asking me to come and meet him. I made certain excuses

but then I had to go on a visit to Pakistan. The General called me and I went to meet him in the President's House where many other scientists were already present. The General came out of his office, opened the door of my car, embraced me and took me along to his room where there were some others present. During our conversation, I expressed my disgust on the promulgation of the Ordinance. The General held my hand and invited me to move to another room so that we could talk in private. The Minister for Scientific Affairs also joined us.

The General said;

“The truth is that a delegation of some Ulema came to see me and told me that the Ahmadis had made certain interpolations in the Holy Quran. I was extremely hurt to hear this. They told me that because of these interpolations Ahmadis should be excluded from the fold of Islam.”

I said to the General;

‘A promise to protect the Holy Quran is present in the Quran itself where the Almighty, addressing the Holy Prophet said that He Himself would protect the Quran. Because of this Divine Promise how can an Ahmadi possibly make any interpolations in the Holy Quran?’

The General got up, walked to a bookshelf and picked up ‘Tafseer-e-Sagheer’.

He said;

‘This contains the Urdu translation of the Holy Quran by Mirza Mahmmud Ahmad. In it the Ulema have marked those verses which have been interpolated by Jamaat Ahmadiyya. I will show you some.’

He opened the ‘Tafseere Sagheer’, put his finger on a spot, which was already marked and said; ‘Here you have made an interpolation.’ I said; ‘The verse has been produced in its entirety, where is the interpolation?’ The General responded by saying:

‘Look here, in this particular verse you are guilty of interpolation as you have translated the verse containing the words ‘Khatam un Nabiyyeen’ as ‘Seal of Prophets’ instead of ‘The Last Prophet’. We cannot possibly bear this.’

I said; ‘The word Khatam used in the Quran is neither a Punjabi word nor an English word and in the Arabic language it means a ‘seal’. I do not wish to be involved in an argument. Do you have a translation by some other scholars?’ The General rose and brought a copy of the Holy Quran with translation by Allama Asad, which had been published from Mecca. I opened the Quran and found that the word ‘Khatam un Nabiyyeen’ had been translated in it as ‘Seal of Prophets’.

The General seemed flabbergasted.

I said;

‘General! Allama Asad was not an Ahmadi and his translation has been published by the Saudi Government. Would you then hold the Saudi Government guilty of interpolation?’ The General responded by saying;

“I am only an illiterate General and whatever the scholars told me I accepted it as the truth.”

I said; ‘You are not just a General but the President of a country and as such it is your responsibility to protect the rights of all sections of the citizens. Here in Islamabad itself the Jamaat Ahmadiyya has stationed a Missionary. Many members of the Jamaat also live here. Was it not your responsibility to send for some Ahmadi scholars and satisfy yourself? Should you not have heard both sides before taking a decision?’ On this, the General read ‘Kalima Shahadah’ aloud and invited me to do the same. In a loud voice I read the ‘Kalima Shahadah’. Then the General said;

‘Salam, I swear by God that I regard you a better Muslim than myself but what could I do when I was pushed into a corner by the Ulema?’

Then he switched over to another subject.”

Dr. Salam was wholly and utterly devoted to Pakistan and loved his country. When I obtained my British passport, I suggested to him at the breakfast table that he should also apply for British nationality and get a British passport, as on a British passport he would find traveling in foreign countries a lot easier. I offered to bring the application form for a British passport across for him. He remained quiet for a while and then said:

“I will never abandon my Pakistan nationality. I am hopeful that before long I will be awarded the Nobel Prize and on my account I would hate to see a country other than Pakistan to be recipient of that honour. I am a Pakistani and I will always remain a Pakistani even though I may have problems in my travels.”

Therefore, throughout his life, he remained a Pakistani and died a Pakistani.

He was deeply devoted to his parents. When his father passed away, he was extremely grief stricken and confined himself to his house. A few days later, I heard from his wife, that he had taken the event to heart and could not devote his mind to any other subject. She said:

“Kindly ask Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib to visit and console him.”

When I mentioned this to Chaudhry Sahib, he visited Dr. Salaam who was sunk in an inconsolable grief. Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib made an effort to console him and said:

“Grief beyond a certain degree is liable to become *shirk* (idolatry).”

He cited his own example and said that although he was an ardent lover of his own mother, on her demise he

patiently became reconciled and submitted to the Will of Allah. After talking to him for a while, he held Dr. Salaam in a long embrace. Dr. Salaam broke down and wept bitterly. That was how he lightened the burden of his grief. Both his parents were ‘saintly personages’ and were recipient of visions and true dreams. They were prayerful. They dearly loved God’s creation and came to the assistance of the poor.

Mrs Abdus Salaam served as Sadar (President) of Lajna Imaillah UK for a long period. Throughout the period when I was the Imam and Missionary in charge of the UK, I received complete co-operation from her. She always remained engaged in service to the community. She also remained engaged in taking care of and showing hospitality towards the guests of her husband.

Very recently, by the sheer mercy and the grace of Allah, another relationship has been established between our families. Dr. Salaam’s grandchild (a son of his daughter) Dr. Faiz ur Rahman, who is a son of Dr. Hameed ur Rahman and Dr. Azeeza Salaam, is engaged to marry my granddaughter Madeeha Hinna Khan, a daughter of Abd ul Waheed Khan and Amat ul Naseer Neeno. May Allah bless this union immensely.

Meetings With Dr. Ashique Hussain Batalvi

Mr. Ashique Hussain Batalvi was an eminent writer, historian and political analyst of Punjab. He authored a number of books covering various topics. He was very close to Allama Iqbal and he also wrote a book entitled ‘Iqbal Ke Akhri Do Saal’ (*The Last Two Years of Iqbal*) which received wide acceptance among its readers. His writings both in Urdu and English were widely appreciated. He belonged to Batala. He had a deep and

sincere love for the members of the family of Hadrat Mashi Mauod ^{a.s} particularly for Hadrat Musleh Mauood r.a. He was a very active member of the Muslim league and had also close relationship with Qaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinah.

From 1953 till his demise he lived in London. He spent most of his time in different libraries. During the year 1970 when Hadrat Ch. Mohammad Zafarullah Khan Sahib came over to London permanently, Dr. Batalvi Sahib frequently visited the Mission House and spent most of his hours with me in my office after having a meeting with Hadrat Chaudhary Sahib. He would also visit the Mission House to see Dr. Abdus Salam Sahib.

As Dr. Batalvi Sahib came to meet Hadrat Chaudhary without seeking prior appointment he would sit with me till Hadrat Ch. Sahib got ready to meet him. His knowledge was encyclopedic about Qaid-e-Azam and the creation of Pakistan. His discussions were therefore mostly confined to political issues. Though I had no interest in politics I would listen to his long discussions just out of respect and regard for him.

The other day Dr. Batalvi Sahib related an incident to me. He said:

“At the time of Partition, I was in Lahore. I could not withdraw money from my bank account which was in Batala due to the prevailing turbulence, which developed in the wake of partition. So I had to face an acute financial stringency during my stay in Lahore. One day I came to know that Hadrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad Sahib had arrived in Lahore and was staying with Janab Sheikh Bashir Ahmad Sahib advocate.

I came to see Hudur. He knew me very well and he had very cordial relations with my forefathers. I told Hudur about my financial problems and said that it was very difficult to withdraw money from the bank in Batala and requested Hudur to provide me some financial assistance. After listening to my problems very carefully and attentively Hudur said:

‘We too left Qadian very hurriedly and reached here. So we are not in a position to lend any financial assistance to anybody. Nor do I have the knowledge how much money is available in my bank account in Lahore. So I cannot extend you any monetary help at present.’

I came out of Hudur’s room and sat in the Private Secretary’s office for a while and then proceeded towards my residence. I had walked only a few steps when someone came rushing towards me and handed me a letter which was from Hudur. I opened the envelope there and then. It contained seven hundred rupees along with a letter in which Hudur had written:

‘This has happened to me for the first time in my life today that someone approached me for financial help and I had to refuse his request. When I went inside my room, my wife sensing my anxiety, asked me what the matter was. I told her the whole story.

At this, she said that some money was available with her and gave me seven hundred rupees which I am sending to you.'

This amount was like a windfall for me as I was completely penniless at that time."

The next day Batalvi Sahib brought the original letter of Hudur. It was written by Hudur himself. Dr. Batalvi Sahib was so overwhelmed with Hudur's affection that while recounting this incident, tears began to roll down from his eyes.

One day Batalvi Sahib told me that in the public record office he had seen the treaty or agreement signed by King Shah Abdul Aziz Ibne Sauood and the British Government. In that agreement the British Government promised to pay pension to the tune of One Lakh Pounds annually to King Abdul Aziz and also agreed to protect the Saudi Government. In return King Abdul Aziz would take a pledge of loyalty to the British Government and would ensure security of the Haj pilgrims. The King would also be bound to abide by the decisions of the British Government. On my request Dr. Sahib provided me with the copy of that agreement which I sent to Hadrat Khalifatul Masih III.

The Saudi Government had been very unsparing in calling the Ahmadiyya Jamat a by-product of the British but this agreement manifestly proved that the Saudi Government itself was a second fiddle to the British. The fact is that the Jamat Ahmadiyya never received a single penny either from the British or from any other government .

Dr. Batalvi was not really a religious person and he claimed that he was secular. He bitterly opposed the activities of the Mullahs in Pakistan. Once, while talking to Hadhrat Chaudhry Muhammad Zafrulla Khan on the subject of the life and character of the Holy Prophet (saw), Chaudhry Sahib related certain heartrending incidents in Huzoor's life concerning his attributes of forgiveness and of overlooking the faults of others. During the conversation concerning the Holy Prophet (saw), certain words emerged from Dr. Batalvi's lips that had a trace of insolence. At that point, Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib stood up and said to Dr. Batalvi:

“Don't ever come to see me again.”

After Chaudhry Sahib had gone Dr. Batalvi was most remorseful and said that he had not really meant to be disrespectful towards the Holy Prophet (saw) but the wrong words had involuntarily emerged from his lips. He said:

“I am deeply ashamed and remorseful. Please approach Chaudhry Sahib and seek forgiveness for me.”

I went to see Chaudhry Sahib and told him that Dr. Batalvi was extremely ashamed and remorseful and that he could not ever imagine impudence concerning the Holy Prophet. This was a silly mistake and all of us make mistakes sometime or another. At my repeated requests, Chaudhry Sahib agreed to see Dr. Batalvi who attempted to clarify his position and explain that on occasion, due to his secular disposition, he used inappropriate words that created the wrong impression. He said that otherwise he was an arch lover of the Holy Prophet (saw). Fortunately, the matter ended there.

Around that time, Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib gave me a voluminous manuscript and told me that it covered his interview carried out by Columbia University. They had interviewed a number of renowned personalities amongst which he was one. They had recorded the interviews spread over a year. Columbia University had by then put it on tape. Chaudhry Sahib said that he had no need for it. A few days later when I met Dr. Batalvi, I told him about the manuscript and he insisted that I should lend it to him for a few days. After 15 or 20 days, when I asked him to return the manuscript he made it plain that he would not return it but would, after editing it, print it in book form. When I complained to Chaudhry Sahib, he asked me not to insist on the return of the manuscript. He told me that if necessary he would procure another copy for me.

Later on, Dr. Batalvi showed me the edited manuscript, which he named 'The Forgotten Years'. The book was published from Lahore after his death with many alterations in the original script.

Dr. Sahib was a man of letters. He was very polite in his conversation and would prove his points with cogent arguments. He was an authentic authority on Indo-Pak history.

General Akhtar Hussain Malik

Some Memories

In 1968 Sahibzada Mirza Mubarak Ahmad, the then Wakeel ut Tabsheer, wrote to me from Rabwah and said that he was planning a trip to Turkey, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. He said that he would be happy if I could accompany him at my own expense. A short while earlier I had already written to the Sahibzada Sahib that under instructions from Mr Tubman, the President of Liberia, and the Liberian Government had already sent me some travel vouchers. I said that by using these vouchers and without spending any money of my own, I could undertake a journey to those few countries. I believe the Sahibzada Sahib had in mind those Travel Vouchers. Therefore I made up my mind to accompany him. As the journey was to commence from Turkey I reached Istanbul ahead of the Sahibzada Sahib and got settled in a hotel. Two days later the Sahibzada Sahib arrived at Istanbul where we spent five days together. We visited all the worth seeing places in Istanbul. We saw the beautiful mosques constructed during the Ottoman Empire; we visited the world famous Tap kopi Museum where we looked at curios associated, in one way or another, to the Holy Prophet SAW, his Successors and his Companions. With great respect and reverence the priceless articles were all secured in protected glass cabinets and we were able to offer prayers in that room. We prayed for the restorations of the pristine glory of Islam.

More than a dozen Companions of the Holy Prophet were buried in Istanbul. Amongst them was Hadhrat Abu Ayub Ansari. When Holy Prophet SAW

migrated from Mecca to Medina, he stayed at the dwelling of Abu Ayub Ansari for a period of six months. Hadrat Abu Ayub Ansari was included in the Muslim army which reached Turkey to take over Istanbul. He died and was buried here.

We went in a taxi to pray at his grave. Thereafter we offered Nawafil (voluntary prayers) in the adjoining mosque. We expressed our gratitude to Allah for having blessed us with the privilege to visit the grave of such an illustrious and outstanding Companion.

We went Izmir from Istanbul and spent one night there. There we met our sincere Turkish friend, Shabbir Sanai who had translated the Promised Messiah's book 'Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam' into Turkish. He was indeed a very sincere friend. He has since passed away. We remained together for the whole day. We had also planned to visit Ankara where General Akhtar Hussain Malik was then representing Pakistan in CENTO. During their student days in Qadian, the General and the Sahibzada Mirza Mubarak Ahmad Sahib were classmates. On instructions from the Sahibzada Sahib, I telephoned the General and asked him to book us a hotel. The General responded by saying:

“Where is the need for a hotel? My house is at your disposal and it will give me a great pleasure to serve the guests like you.”

On the appointed day of our arrival, we found the General waiting for us in his car on the tarmac quite close to the exit from our aircraft. On many occasions, I had heard a lot about the General but I had never met him. From the door of the aircraft, we saw a six feet tall, handsome, elegant and attentive young man who was none

other than General Akhtar Hussain Malik. He received us very warmly and drove us to his residence. While he was stationed in Turkey, he had the rank of an Ambassador of Pakistan.

The following day the General arranged a sumptuous feast at his residence in honor of Sahibzada Mirza Mubarak Ahmad Sahib. All the members of the staff of the Pakistan Embassy and some other respectable Pakistanis were amongst the guests. We were introduced to his distinguished guests. At the dinner table he narrated certain incidents of his student days in Qadian. During his conversation, the General paid great tributes to Hadhrat Musleh Maood. Apart from recounting his childhood memories the General told us that, even during his military career, he received valuable guidance from Huzoor. He said that although Huzoor was a religious leader, from his discourse it appeared as if he had passed out from a distinguished Military Academy. The General said that occasionally, he would take along with him some other Generals also to meet Huzoor and all of them would come back deeply impressed. They were all greatly amazed at Huzoor's profound and commanding knowledge of military affairs.

The following day, in my conversation with the General, I brought up the subject of Maulana Rumi. The Sahibzada Sahib asked the General if it would be possible for us to visit the grave of the Maulana Rumi at Konia. The General said that he adored Maulana Rumi and he had read his Masnavi a number of times. The General instructed his Secretary to make all the necessary arrangements for our visit to Konia.

The following day we set out for Konia in the car of the General. Another vehicle carried our lunch. All the

way to Konia the General kept on reciting verses from the Masnavi. He had obviously memorised all the verse that he recited. I was greatly surprised that an Army General should have mastered the work of Maulana Rumi. On arrival at Konia, we discovered that it was a public holiday and the mausoleum was closed. As the General had sent a message earlier on, as a special favour to us, the doors were opened and we were able to visit the mausoleum. Standing near the headstone, we were enabled to offer earnest supplications. We especially prayed for the day when through Ahmadiyyat, the pristine grandeur and majesty of Islam would be re-established. In the evening, we returned to Ankara. The next day the General took us to the tomb of Kamal Ata-turk. The General seemed to be very impressed by Kamal Atatürk. In her hospitality the General's wife left no stone unturned. Mrs Malik was a Moosia and was very devoted to Hadhrat Musleh Maood. She was beside herself with joy for having been able to play host to a grandson of the Promised Messiah who was also a son of the Musleh Maood.

Later, once again the General visited London. He had informed me of his visit beforehand. He came to the Mission House and we spent much time together.

What impressed me more than anything else was the extreme simplicity in the General's behaviour. Although he was a high ranking General, there was not the slightest trace of pride or arrogance in him. I was much younger than him yet he treated me with great respect. Whenever he noticed humility in my conduct, he would say:

“You are the Imam and Hadhrat
Musleh Maood has appointed you on this
position.”

He would assume such meekness in front of the Sahibzada Mirza Mubarak Ahmad Sahib as if he had taken on a role of a servant. May Allah admit the General and his wife into Heaven and elevate their positions. Both are buried in Rabwah.

In 1998, the children of Dr. Abd ul Waheed Khan and his wife Amtul Naseer Neno invited us to accompany us for a tour of Turkey. So I and my wife alongwith Dr. Waheed, Neeno, Madeeha, Alia, and Humayun set out on the journey. We stayed in Istanbul for 7 days. There we relived our pleasant memories. We visited the graves of the Companions of the Holy Prophet and offered our prayers there. We also revisited the Tap Kopi museum and certain other historical places and enjoyed ourselves very much. May Allah reward these members of my progeny abundantly. Amen.

During my visits to Turkey, I could not hold back the memories of my dear old friend Muhammad Afzal Khan from my mind. I first met him during my student days in Chiniot half a century ago. Soon our affection for each other developed to the stage of brotherhood. Afzal Khan was a descendent of very well to do and influential Turk family and he was the first to accept Ahmadiyyat in Rabwah. Hadhrat Musleh Maood regarded him as the 'first fruit' granted to the Jamaat in Rabwah. These days, he is permanently settled in London and has always maintained a deep, sincere and loving relationship with me.

The Honor of Being The Royal Guest In Liberia

In June 1967 Mubarak Ahmad Saqi, the then Ameer and Missionary in Charge in Liberia, wrote to me that in the immediate future Mr. Tub Man the Liberian President was visiting England. He said that the President's relationship with the Jamaat in Liberia was warm and cordial. Mr. Tub Man would often invite Mr. Saqi to official ceremonies and functions. He suggested that, on his arrival, the British Ahmadiyya Jamaat should welcome him.

I contacted the British Foreign Office and obtained the necessary information concerning President Tubman's visit to Britain. The Liberian President, after completing his official business spread over three days, settled in the Royal Garden Hotel, Kensington where he had reserved a whole wing. I contacted his Private Secretary and asked for an appointment to see him. He returned my call the next day and told me that I could see the President, only for ten minutes, two days later. Accordingly, I got to the Hotel to meet the President. His staff, which had accompanied him from Liberia, had taken control of the management of that wing of the Hotel, which had been reserved for them. Even a lift was set apart for the exclusive use of the President, his staff and his guests.

I found the President, sitting by himself, in a beautiful, well decorated drawing room. He got up to receive me and after making the normal courteous enquiries, he expressed complete satisfaction and approval concerning the work of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission in Liberia. He said that he had issued standing instructions

that Mr Mubarak Ahmad Saqi should be invited to all National functions. I thanked him and then very briefly I gave him an account of the British Mission. When ten minutes had elapsed, the Private Secretary opened the door and signaled to me to leave. I was about to get up when the President said that I couldn't possibly leave, as I had not even had some coffee. He instructed his Private Secretary to send in some coffee. Therefore, the interview continued for forty-five minutes. We talked on various religious subjects. Although he was a Christian, he believed in the Unity of God and was a champion of religious tolerance.

I invited him to visit the Fazl Mosque in London and he very kindly accepted my request. He said that the exact date and time could be determined later. The following day his Private Secretary told me when the President would visit the Mosque. I requested that when the President visits the Mosque he should have a meal with us. Accepting our request the President told us that forty people would accompany him. Amongst them would be some Ministers, some Generals and some members of the staff of Liberian TV & Radio and of course some journalists.

I requested Hadrat CHaudhary Zafrullah Khan Sahib, who was then in The Hague, to join us on this occasion.

On the day the President was to visit the Mosque a Chief of the British Police and some Senior Police Officers came to the Mosque to assess the security arrangements. Some local press reporters also turned up. Around the Mosque there was considerable hustle and bustle.

At six in the evening, the President, along with his retinue, duly escorted by the British Police, arrived at the Mosque. Hadrat Chaudhry Zafrullah Khan Sahib, Abdul Aziz Deen and I received him. He visited the Mosque where, in some detail, he was advised of its history and its importance. After his visit to the Mosque, he was escorted to the Hall at 61 Melrose Road where, arrangements had been made for dinner. The meals had been ordered from a restaurant. After dinner I presented an 'Address of Welcome'. The Liberian TV and Radio recorded the entire proceedings. In response to my Address of Welcome, the President started by saying that for the first time in his life no wine was served at dinner. However, he said that he was content, as the absence of wine had left him in a state of good cheer.

In his address, the President complimented the Jamaat Ahmadiyya. He particularly said that meeting Hadrat Chaudhry Zafrulla Khan Sahib had given him great pleasure. He said that although Liberia was a Christian country and in a way it was the centre for the propagation of Christianity in Africa, he had issued strict instructions that every Faith should have complete freedom to propagate. He expressed his satisfaction over the welfare and humanitarian work undertaken by the Jamaat Ahmadiyya in his country. The Liberian TV and Radio recorded both the President's speech and my address. A few days later, these were broadcast in Liberia.

The day following his visit to the Mosque, through a special courier, I received a letter from him in which he expressed his gratitude for the previous day's function. In this letter, he invited me, as a guest of the Liberian Government, to participate in the Anniversary celebrations of Liberian Independence in July that year. I tendered my

apologies for my inability to do myself the honor as Hadhrat Khalifa tul Masih III was to visit England in August that year. In the following year, in another letter the President invited me to participate in the celebrations of the 120th year of their independence. With permission from Hadhrat Khalifa tul Masih III, I accepted this kind invitation.

In 1968, the Liberian Ambassador in Britain told me that he had received instructions from the President, Mr Tubman, to make the necessary arrangements for our travel to Liberia. I told him that my wife and my son Munir Ahmad would accompany me. A few days later, I received First Class tickets for all three of us. As our flight was routed through Sierra Leone, it was settled that, for a few days, we would break our journey in Sierra Leone. On 24th July 1968, we reached Monrovia at noon by an MEA flight from Sierra Leone. When I looked through a window of the aero plane, I could see hundreds of people gathered at the Airport. I imagined that perhaps a VIP was traveling in our plane and the crowd had gathered to welcome him. A short while later, Mubarak Ahmad Saqi, the Amir and Missionary in Charge in Liberia, came on to the airplane and told me that this crowd was there to welcome me. He also told me that the Liberian Foreign Minister, representing the President, had come and that representatives of the Liberian Muslim Congress were also present. Most of them had come to the Airport in buses provided by the Government in accordance with instructions from the President. My heart was filled with sentiments of gratitude to the Almighty in that a day had dawned when a Missionary of the Jamaat Ahmadiyya was being treated as a State guest. On disembarkation, I met the Foreign Minister who told me that he had come to

welcome me on behalf of the President. I met all the VIPs and others who were standing in a long queue. All this took over one hour. Then we proceeded towards the capital Monrovia in a convoy. Escorting us, a police vehicle travelled in front of our car to clear the traffic. The Government had arranged for us to stay in the Inter Continental Hotel.

The Foreign Minister told me that at 11 a.m. the next morning I was to have coffee with the President in his palace. After the Foreign Minister had departed, Mubarak Ahmad Saqi and I talked about various matters concerning Liberia. We visited the Mission House in the evening where members of the Executive Committee were present. We had been provided a large air-conditioned American vehicle throughout our stay. The Police escorted us wherever we went. It was indeed a great pleasure to meet the members of the Liberian Jamaat. I was deeply impressed by the dedication of some members of the Jamaat. Repeatedly I reflected that, in the past, there were days when the Promised Messiah ^{a.s} lived in the distant and isolated township of Qadian where there were no modern facilities and where the Promised Messiah ^{a.s} spent his life in obscurity. He himself said:

کوئی نہ جانتا تھا کہ بے قادیاں کدھر

No one even knew where Qadian was situated.

Now, a day has come when in the far-away and dark African Continent there were so many adherents to Islam who, day and night, invoke blessings on the Holy Prophet ^{s.a.w}. Besides, there were Heads of Governments and States who take pride in showing hospitality to the servants of the Promised Messiah ^{a.s}.

The following day, along with the Foreign Minister, I went to Executive House, the official residence of the

President which had recently been constructed at a cost of 160 Millions Dollars. At 11 am when we entered his room the President was waiting for us and he greeted me warmly. We were served coffee. Once again, he expressed his great satisfaction at the work of the Ahmadiyya Jamaat.

He said:

“I know very well that your Jamaat is serving only to win the pleasure of God. Whereas many Other Muslim groups in our country approach me but they just seem to want monetary help. They flatter me to gain financial aid. I do help them and give them money, but only reluctantly. So I have little respect for them. Whereas your Jamaat is rendering valuable service in Liberia not in exchange for any reward but only to win the pleasure of God, They have never approached me for financial help.”

Then he said to me:

“As your wife has come with you why hasn't she come to see me?”

I explained that she observed Purdah. So he instructed his Private Secretary to arrange a meeting between his wife and Mrs Rafiq. He stipulated that during their meeting only ladies should attend. The next day my wife went to see the wife of the President.

On her return she said:

“The President's instructions were carried out in letter. As my car entered the porch of the President's house a lady opened the door. Even the lift was being operated by a lady. Mrs. Tub Man received me warmly.

During our meeting, which lasted over an hour, Mrs Tubman and I talked, not only about the Jamaat, but also about the conditions of women in Pakistan.”

At the end of the meeting Mrs Tubman gave my wife some presents.

During my meeting with the President on 25th July he said that on the following day there was a function in the afternoon to celebrate their Independence in which I must participate. I said that I would strictly adhere to the program chalked out for me as I had come to Liberia on his invitation. At the function on 26th July, the President made me sit on his left. The person on his right was perhaps the Vice President. After drinks and refreshments had been served, the President addressed the nation through Television and Radio. Towards the end of his address, he particularly made mention of me. He also spoke of the Jamaat in favorable terms. He asked me to stand up and he shook my hand. We stood in that position for a while. This was an extraordinary honor bestowed on a Missionary of the Jamaat Ahmadiyya by Allah out of his sheer grace. Otherwise what am I and where do I stand?

The next day, during the meeting at 11 a.m. the President said that the Muslim Congress of Liberia wanted to arrange a Dinner in my honor in which he (The President) himself would be present. Therefore, on the evening of the 27th, a Dinner was arranged in a Hotel at Monrovia. On the stage I was given a seat on the right of the President while the British Ambassador sat on his left. After dinner, in his presence, I spoke on the subject of ‘Islam in Britain’. The President also delivered a short speech and declared that after dinner he would put on me the traditional robe worn by Liberian Chiefs. At that

function, the British Ambassador also delivered a short speech. He said that he was happy that the Imam of a Mosque in his country, as a representative of the Jamaat Ahmadiyya, had received the honor of being invited as a State Guest by the President. At the end of the function, the President, with his own hands, made me wear an expensive and attractively embroidered robe and headgear. In a way I then became a Liberian Chief. This whole function was televised live. الحمد لله

The next day my interview was broadcast through Liberian TV which lasted ten minutes. I took advantage of this occasion and introduced the Jamaat Ahmadiyya and its activities.

The Liberian newspaper covered my entire tour by publishing my daily activities with photographs. In the meanwhile the British Ambassador in Monrovia also invited me and some leaders of the Muslim Congress for the lunch. This occasion also proved most advantageous for the introduction of the Jamaat and its activities.

At the end of the Liberian tour, when I was about to depart for (Aqra) Ghana, the Foreign Minister, another Minister, representatives of the Police and the Army, Governor of the Muslim Congress Somomomo and scores of other dignitaries had come to see me off at the airport

My Visit To The African Jamats

My trip to Liberia provided me the opportunity to visit some of the Jamats in Africa and meet their members. I requested the ambassador of Liberia to make our tickets in such a way as to facilitate our visit to the Ahmadiyya Jamats in Sierra Leone and Ghana en route Liberia. He arranged first class tickets for us. We boarded a British Airways flight from London to Sierra Leone. The ambassador of Liberia was kind enough to come to see us off at the airport. He also arranged a car for us to take us to the airport from the London Mosque. The weather was very pleasant in London, when we boarded the plane. But no sooner did we land at the Lungi airport than we felt as if we had been pushed into an oven. The weather was scorchingly hot and humid outside.

The airport of Lungi consisted of a small building. After the formalities of customs etc. we came out. It was four p.m. We looked around if somebody was there to receive us but unfortunately due to a misunderstanding nobody had turned up. Anxiety seized us as we had landed in the land of Africa for the first time and we knew nobody there. Moreover we did not have the address of our Mission House in Freetown. In those days correspondence with African Missions was conducted at post box number address. Wondering what to do we sat on a bench. We did not even know how far Freetown was from the airport. We sat there for one and a half hour in the hope that somebody would surely come to receive us. Our condition could be described in the following words:

“Hopelessness is the fate of those who entertain over-expectations.”

We were engrossed in prayers when an African approached us and asked us to board the bus which was bound for Freetown. We got into the bus. Still we were in a state of inexplicable distress as how we could get the address of our Mission House once we reached Freetown. Before the bus started the driver reading our perplexity asked us where we had to go. I replied that I was an Ahmadi and I had to stay in the Ahmadiyya Mission House. Hearing this the driver's face expanded into a broad smile. He said:

“ Who doesn't know the Ahmadiyya Mission House? Rest assured I will get you a cab for Mission House when you reach Freetown.”

Freetown was at a distance of 50 to 60 miles from Lungi. In between a river has to be crossed in a ferry. We reached Ambassador Hotel of Freetown in the evening. This was the terminus point of the buses coming from the airport. When we got down the bus, the driver called a cab which was to take us to the Ahmadiyya Mission House. The cab driver said:

“Your Missionary in-charge is not in the Mission House at present. He has gone to the house of an Ahmadi where some other members of your Jamat are also present. Should I take you there or to the Mission House?”

I asked him to take us to the Mission House. In a short while we reached the Mission House and supplicated before Allah.

Our Mission House is situated in the well known area of the town. The residence of the President of Sierra Leone was close to our Mission House. The Mubaligh

Sahib had not yet arrived in the Mission House but there a couple of other members of the Jamat were present there who though had the knowledge of my visit, didn't knew the exact date of my arrival. They showed us our room and we put our luggage in it. We expressed our gratitude to Allah and heaved a sigh of relief.

Our room was large enough with an attached toilet and bathroom. We were advised to use water sparingly as there was acute scarcity of water. We spent our first night restlessly. It was scorchingly hot and we had to suffer severe mosquito bites. It seemed as if it were not the mosquitoes but a volley of bombs attacking us. On the floor there were hundreds of ants moving about. My son had not seen any mosquito or ant before nor did he suffer the pain of their bite. The helpless child could not sleep a wink the whole night.

Somehow the night passed. In the morning, we were served a lavish breakfast. The whole night, I invoked prayers on our missionary workers who spent long years under such odd circumstances and bore the pains of hot and humid climate and also the attacks of enemies of Ahmadiyyat but never uttered a word of complaint or grievance. My heart was filled with the feelings of gratitude and I prayed for them.

The next day, Janab Ameer Sahib took us round the city. On the way we were introduced to Ahmadi brethren at different places and I was very impressed with the affection, devotion and the hospitality of those people. Though they were financially poor yet they were culturally rich. Their hearts were filled with devotion, affection and faithfulness for Ahmadiyyat. They were beside themselves with joy to meet an Ahmadi from England.

We also visited Ahmadiyya Secondary School where we were accorded a warm and affectionate welcome by the teachers and students of the school. Most of the teachers were from Pakistan. We offered Isha prayer in the school mosque and returned to the Mission House at night. After our three-day long stay, Janab Ameer Sahib was kind enough to invite us to visit Ahmadiyya Mission Houses and meet Ahmadi brethren in some of the other cities of Sierra Leone. We had enough time so we accepted the invitation with great pleasure. We set out for 'Bo' the central city of Sierra Leone in the car of Janab Ameer Sahib which he himself was driving. 'Bo' is the second largest city of Sierra Leone and is situated at a distance of 140 miles from Freetown. The roads were not in a very good condition. (*This was in 1968. Maybe the condition of the roads has improved now*) There is a mosque, a mission house and a secondary school of the Jamat in 'Bo'. Members of the Jamat lined on either side of the road to welcome us. We moved on after shaking hands with every one. The devotion and love for Ahmadiyyat and the hospitality of the poor African Ahmadies moved my heart very much. We had covered half the distance when we reached a large town. Its name was 91Mile. We made a brief stop there. It was raining heavily and we could see water all around. We thought it was impossible to meet any Ahmadi in such a stormy and rainy weather. Suddenly I spotted some Ahmadies drenched to the skin who were standing on the side of the road to welcome us. This sight moved me to tears. I got off the car. An African Ahmadi held out an umbrella over my head and thus I was able to meet all the Ahmadi members. This was a soul inspiring sight for me. Even today, when I recall that sight to my mind, my heart is

filled with the feelings of gratitude and prayer for those Ahmadies. The truth is that if one wants to witness the scenes of devotion, affection and self-effacement for Ahmadiyyat one should visit Africa. We reached 'Bo' towards night and stayed in the Mission House. The next day the local Muballigh Sahib took us round the 'Bo' city. We also visited the Ahmadiyya Secondary School and we were exhilarated to learn about the commendable progress of the school. This school is reckoned among the best of the schools of the area. In the evening Mubaligh Sahib told me that an elderly and the most devoted Ahmadi of 'Bo' Jamat Janab Alhaj Ali Rogers Sahib would come to meet me. He also told me that the financial sacrifices and the monetary contributions of Mr. Rogers are highly commendable. Janab Alhaj Roger Sahib arrived in the evening. He was a strapping old man. His face was glowing with spirituality. He greeted me warmly and congratulated me on visiting 'Bo'. During the course of our conversation I asked him how Ahmadiyyat was established in 'Bo'. He kept silent for a moment and then said that he was an eye witness to the arrival of the first Muballigh of Jamat and the establishment of Ahmadiyyat in 'Bo'. I would now like to give an account of this soul inspiring story in the words of Mr. Janab Alhaj Rogers:

“It happened in 1939-40 when I lived in the city of Bo. My parents were utterly poor and they could not afford to admit me in any school. One day I heard someone beating a drum. He was announcing in a loud voice that a Muslim missionary had arrived in our town who said that Masih-e-Moud, through whom Allah was to grant victory to Islam over all other religions, had been born in India. There

was no one in Bo to listen to his words nor did any one offer him shelter. I heard this announcement again and again. I was wondering why a Muslim Missionary was being prevented from conveying his message whereas the Christian Missionaries were allowed to propagate their faith without any hindrance.

I was engrossed in my thoughts when I suddenly spotted an Indian accompanied by an African boy who was carrying his trunk. I also joined them. I saw that the Indian Muballigh, whose name was Hadrat Nazir Ahmad Ali, went to every inn to spend the night but he was not given shelter anywhere. I continued to walk with them. After a while I put his trunk on my head and Nazir Ali Sahib after paying some coins to the boy let him go. We had become very tired because of our long walk in search of shelter. Nazir Ahmad Ali Sahib was very frail and thin and he also experienced bouts of cough from time to time.

When it began to grow dark, Nazir Ali Sahib said to me, "Rogers! the people of this city will not give us shelter for the night. Let us spend the night in the open under a tree." I replied that there was the danger of wild animals in the open all the time and at night in particular. Nazir Ahmad Ali Sahib said, "Don't worry, Allah will protect us." So we sat under a huge tree. Nazir Ahmad Sahib took out a carpet from his trunk and spread it out. Both of us sat on it. I gathered some dry straws, twigs and leaves

and lighted the fire to keep off wild animals from us. Then Nazir Ahmad Ali Sahib took out a packet of biscuits from his trunk and both of us shared it. Soon I fell asleep but Nazir Ahmad Sahib began to offer prayers. At midnight I woke up to hear some one coughing severely. I saw that Nazir Ahmad Sahib had a severe bout of Asthma. The humid air of the open intensified the attack of Asthma. He was feeling difficulty in breathing and was in a state of great restlessness. I was frightened to see him in such a condition and began to weep. However Nazir Ahmad Sahib comforted me and asked me to give him a bottle out of his trunk. He took out some pills from that bottle and swallowed them. After a while he felt relieved and slumber took over him. I also felt asleep. At dawn when I opened my eyes I saw Hadrat Nazir Ahmad Ali prostrating on the ground and I felt as if a pot was simmering on the fire. He was praying fervently. This sight had a great effect on me but then as a child, I was completely ignorant of prayer, namaz and spirituality.

When Hadrat Nazir Ahmad Ali finished with his prayers he took out another packet of biscuits and both of us ate from it. Now his condition had improved a lot. He collected his belongings and put them in the trunk. Then he said to me, "Rogers! Listen to my words carefully. Last night my God told me that He would establish Ahmadiyyat in this city on a firm footing and He would grant us this whole

area where we have spent the night. Be a witness to this event.”

Saying this Janab Alhaj Rogers Sahib burst into uncontrollable tears. After a while he composed himself and said:

“ Imam Sahib! Today, where our secondary is situated, is the same place where we had spent that night and now the whole area is ours.”

I was moved to tears to listen to the account of Alhaj Rogers Sahib. I prayed from the bottom of my heart for Hadrat Nazir Ahmad Ali Sahib who, despite his weak and frail body and financial stringency, propagated the message of the Promised Massiah^{a.s} in the land of Africa with great courage and patience.

I also had the blessed opportunity to be a disciple of Hadrat Moulvi Nazir Ahmad Sahib. When I was the student of Jamia-tul Mubasherin, he used to impart us the guidelines as to how we should conduct ourselves in the field of Tabligh. I had also listened to his fiery speech which he delivered before his final departure to Africa. At that time his health was deteriorating and it seemed as if he would not be able to return from Africa.

We set out for Bama after our two day's stay at Bo. Here also the Jamat was established through the efforts of Hadrat Moulvi Nazir Ahmad Ali. The passage to Bama was difficult and the road was also in a dilapidated condition. The whole area was infested with monkeys. We spent a day in this town and met the members of Jamat.

Another soul inspiring incident came to our knowledge here. We were sitting with our Muallim Sahib when an elderly person approached us. Muallim Sahib told us that this man was an eye witness to the first visit of

Nazir Ahmad Ali Sahib in this village. I requested the old man to give us an account of that visit. At this he said:

“A long time ago, when I was a young boy, some English officers used to visit our village but they would leave the village before evening as this area was insecure.

One day I saw a weak and frail man approaching our village accompanied by a servant who was carrying his trunk. Both of them were on foot. I rushed towards them. I took them to the chief of the village at their request. They requested the chief to allow them to stay in the village for the night. The elderly man said that he was an Ahmadiyya Missionary and wanted to address the people of the village. The chief asked them some questions and granted their request. At the time of Asar prayer Hadrat Moulvi Nazir Ahmad Ali Sahib asked the chief to gather the people. Hadrat Moulvi Nazir Ahmad Ali Sahib addressed the gathering with the help of a translator. He presented the teachings of Islam and announced that Masih Mowood has come.

Towards the evening, the chief asked Moulvi Sahib to leave the village. Moulvi Sahib replied that he wouldn't do so until he had established Ahmadiyyat in the village. The chief expressed his inability to guarantee his security. Moulvi Sahib said he had no need of his protection as God was his Protector. He requested the chief to just allow him to stay there. The chief said that he could stay there as

long as he wished and, pointing towards an empty hut, told him that he could stay in it.

Hadrat Moulvi Sahib stayed in that village for six months. Many people of our village embraced Islam and Ahmadiyyat. Hadrat Moulvi Sahib advised the women of the village to put on proper dress and he worked very hard to impress this point upon the women.”

We were moved to tears to listen to this soul-inspiring incident and our hearts were filled with gratitude for Moulvi Nazir Ahmad Sahib and throughout our journey we prayed for him.

Allah blessed Janab Alhaj Roger Sahib with both spiritual and material prosperity and also gave him a generous heart to spend in the way of Allah. Mr. Rogers gifted his two expensive houses to Ahmadiyya Mission in which the Nazir Ahmad Press is located at present.

Mr. Tommy Kahlon, who is the grandson of Janab Alhaj Rogers Sahib, is now the President of Majlis Khuddam-ul Ahmadiyya UK. He is a very sincere and devoted Ahmadi. This is all the grace of Allah and the fruits of the prayers of his grandfather. We visited some other cities in Sierra Leone but the above two incidents impressed us most. At the end of our visit to Liberia we set out for Ghana. Hadrat Moulana Ataullah Kalim was the then Amir Jamat. I had developed a bond of deep affection with him in Rabwah and he still maintained the same relationship with me. I had another couple of loving and sincere friends in Ghana. They were Janab Abdul Wahab Adam Sahib and Mirza Lutfur Rahman Sahib. I had known them and befriended them since I was a student at Jamiatul Mubashrin.

Our plane landed at the Akra airport. Our joy knew no bounds when we saw Hadrat Kalim Sahib waiting for us at the exit of the plane. We went straight to the Customs counter to collect our luggage. The luggage of the passengers was lying scattered on a number of tables. My luggage was also on a table. I moved forward with my luggage to show it to the customs officer who was a very smart and alert young man. He saw my passport which bore the word 'Missionary' against my name. He asked me if I was an Ahmadiyya Missionary. I replied in the affirmative. Then he took me to a separate cabin and said, "I have complete belief in the acceptance of the prayers of Ahmadiyya Missionaries. Though I am a Christian yet I believe in the acceptance of the prayers of Ahmadies. I have been married for a few years but I have no issue. I request you to pray that I may have children. Please give me a promise that you will pray for me." I felt pity for him and promised that I would certainly pray for him.

Then we came out of the cabin. Hadrat Kalim Sahib looked very perplexed. I told him the incident. After that the customs officer also requested Hadrat Kalim Sahib to pray for him and handed our luggage without inspection. My heart was filled with prayers for the elderly mubalghin who worked in Africa and whose sacrifices were now bearing fruits. In fact, only that Muballigh tastes the fruit of success who not only believes in the acceptance of prayers but also becomes an epitome of prayer himself. Such a Mubaligh also prays day and night for those people to whom he preaches the message of Islam. No *Tabligh* can be successful without prayers. Only prayers unlock the closed hearts and quench the parched fields.

During my journey to Africa, I learnt one thing that I should follow the footsteps of the Missionaries who worked tirelessly and did exemplary sacrifices.

During our visit to Akra, Saltpond, Kamasi and some other places we had the opportunity to meet the Ahmadi people of those areas. Their devotion and noble example left an indelible impression on my heart and mind.

I also addressed a press conference in Akra and gave interviews to the radio and television. I had also the honor to address the students of Ahmadiyya schools and Jamia.

Mr. Abdul Wahab Adam Sahib and Mr. Mirza Lutufur Rahman Sahib accompanied us throughout the tour. May Allah bless them with a long and healthy life. Amen.

My Visit to Spain

Spain is probably the only country in the world that has witnessed seven hundred years of glorious Islamic rule. The Islamic teachings and Quranic treasures profited not only the Muslims but also the rest of the world during that golden age. The Muslims entered Spain when the whole of the Europe was suffering from tyranny, despotism, backwardness and ignorance. The whole of Europe had turned into a dreary desert devoid of knowledge. The church hierarchy had been exploiting the masses. Moral depravity was at its zenith. Nobody's honor was safe.

As education was limited to the church, only the clergymen and the monks were the richest. Most of the agricultural land was under the possession of the church.

The plight of the people was inexplicable. They were utterly poor and helpless.

I had the first opportunity to visit Spain in 1960 along with Hadrat Mian Mubarak Ahmad Sahib and Mian Muneer Ahmad Sahib. We witnessed the signs of past glory of Islam--- majestic mosques and magnificent mansions.

I was privileged to accompany Hadhrat Khalifa tul Masih III to visit Spain for the second time in 1970. How fortunate was this humble person to be given an opportunity to once again visit Spain, which could provide a new life to the historic and spiritual memories. Through his benevolence, Huzoor included me in his entourage.

In June 1970 the Spanish soil was restored to spiritual life with greater glory than in the past. After nearly four centuries the sterile soil of Spain once again witnessed the advent of a spring.

On 25th June, Huzoor, along with his entourage left London for Spain by air. In this historic journey, apart from Hadhrat Begum Sahiba, the following accompanied Huzoor:

Sahibzada Mirza Mubarak Ahmad, Ch. Zahur Ahmad Bajwa, Ch. Muhammad Ali, Muhammad Saleem Nasir and this humble servant (B.A. Rafiq). It was a flight that lasted about two hours. Huzoor became somewhat restive as we approached Madrid. When the Madrid Airport came into view, he turned back and said:

“I can hear the tramp of the hooves of
Tariq’s horses. Can you also hear them?”

In an agonizing manner, Huzoor repeated this question two or three times.

My sentiments and thoughts had created turbulence in my very being. I was proud at being so fortunate as to

be included in the vanguard of the spiritual army that would triumph over Spain. A country where for centuries past Muslims had spread Quranic teachings that had made the land lush; the land where later on the Muslims faced devastation in a state of utter helplessness and had to leave Spain.

When Huzoor disembarked from the aeroplane Moulvi Karam Ilahi Zafar, our Missionary in Spain, along with his family, was there to welcome him. We moved to a Hotel in Madrid where we stayed for two days. I made arrangements with the help of Moulvi Karam Ilahi Zafar Sahib for our travel to the Andalusia Province by road.

We left for Cordoba on the 27th June.

During the Islamic rule of all the towns in Spain, Cordoba was a gem. It was truly worthy of being described as the 'Wedding of the Land'. A sturdy wall surrounded the town. The whole town had well laid out wide roads. Its citizens adorned themselves by wearing robes and decorations of knowledge. Thousands of students attended the Cordoba Islamic University. Students all over Europe and Asia considered it a great honour to be admitted to this academy. There were any numbers of scholars. The great Ibn Rushd also lived in Cordoba.

The Royal Palaces built on the pattern of Islamic architecture further enhanced the magnetism of the town. The town was spread over an area of ten miles. The Muslim Caliphs had decorated the town with rare trees and bushes brought from all over the world. In order to supply water to the gardens, with great effort, some hills around Cordoba were cut so that the canals could carry plentiful clean and pure water. It was because of this water that Cordoba became a 'garden town'.

It was in Cordoba where to remember his native land Abd ur Rahman, the first Monarch of the Umayyad dynasty planted a date tree brought from Damascus. That was the very first date tree planted in Spain. Abd ur Rahman was a literary person and also a poet of a high order. Through this tree, he had sentimentally linked Spain with his native land.

نظم کا حصہ کھجور کا درخت

Cordoba accommodated many beautiful Mosques. The Jamia Mosque of Cordoba was the greatest of them all and was adorned with beautiful features. In 784 A.D. Amir Abd ur Rahman started work on this Mosque and after his demise his son completed the structure in 793. This Mosque is a rare example of Islamic architecture. After these two Kings, some others Kings tried to further beautify and extend the Mosque. One of them had all the floors laid with marble; one of them had all the pillars gilded; one of them added very tall minarets and one of them provided arrangements for ablution and showers. To comprehend the extent of the Mosque it may be mentioned that there are 1,293 pillars and for illumination 400 chandeliers were provided. The niche and the pulpit were decorated with the very best timber and ivory. To complete this task 36,000 ivory tusks and a large quantity of expensive timber were used.

Hudur along with his entourage stayed in the Melia Hotel in Cordoba. When Hudur came out for a walk in the evening the whole of the city was dazzling with lights. On enquiry we learnt that some Christian festivals were being celebrated that night. The next day Hudur went to visit the famous Cordoba mosque.

As Huzoor entered the Mosque a Professor, who taught in one of the Cordoba colleges, being deeply

influenced by the Huzoor's countenance, approached him, shook his hand and with great deference offered to show him round the Mosque. Huzoor went inside the Mosque guided by the Professor and in the archway, in spite of centuries having passed, saw verses of the Holy Quran written in gold. 'Ayat ul Kursi' was easily legible. Inside the archway, to prevent people entering, an iron fence had been fixed. Without being asked, a guard opened the door and invited Huzoor to enter the archway. All those who accompanied Huzoor also followed him. They were all bursting with emotion. Standing in the archway Huzoor raised his hands and prayed. We also imitated Hudur's gesture and prayed fervently for renaissance of Islam. This was a historic moment indeed. Photographs were also taken of that event.

A part of the mosque had been transformed into a church.

The mosque could accommodate thirty thousand worshipers at one time. This is perhaps the biggest roofed mosque in the world.

Departure For Granada

The following morning Hudur left for Granada but Huzoor decided that after leaving the hotel we should make a stop at the Mosque and Al Qasr. At one time Al Qasr was the residence of the Muslim Governor of Cordoba. There are beautiful fountains, gardens, orchards, shaded trees and beds of fragrant flowers in that palace. Now it is in a dilapidated and pitiable condition.

In the afternoon, we left for Granada. The surface of the road was good but due to the absence of shady trees along the road, the heat of the sun became unbearable. Granada is situated at the foot of the hills and the journey

from Cordoba to Granada was pleasant as the entire route passed through fertile hills. There were plenty of olive orchards. One could also see grape vines in plenty.

We reached Granada in the evening and Huzoor stayed in the Granada Palace Hotel situated in a part of Alhambra. This hotel has been built on the top of a hill. Therefore charming Granada can be seen clearly.

In Granada, my thoughts went back five centuries when it portrayed a beautiful specimen of Islamic culture and civilization. Due to the presence of a large number of scholars and poets, most towns had become centers of learning. There were thousands of beautiful Mosques and baths. It was from Granada that the last Muslim ruler, Abu Abdullah was exiled.

Alhambra is the heart of Granada, which had assumed great fame. A great distinction of this Palace is that here, there and everywhere the words ‘La Ghalib Illa Allah’ have been engraved. In whichever direction you look, you can see these words.

It is related that when Ameer Abd ur Rahman went to see the Palace, he paused at the entrance for a few minutes and then suddenly returned to the palace from which he came. A little later, the courtiers approached the King and enquired as to why he did not pass through the gate of the Palace. The King said:

“When I reached the entrance to the Palace, influenced by its vastness, its beauty, its architecture and the tastefully laid out gardens, for a moment arrogant feelings touched me. At that moment, I said to me; ‘Oh Abd ur Rahman, display of your importance is shirk. My heart shuddered and I came back without seeing the Palace. I was determined not to return to the

Palace until here there and everywhere there is evidence of the dominance of the Almighty so that the thought of pride and arrogance do not enter my mind."

Only after these words had been engraved did the King move into the Palace.

The next day Huzoor went to see Alhambra. The Quranic verses engraved on the walls of the palace and 'La Ghalib Ilalah' attracted the attention of Hudur. Huzoor stayed in Granada for two days. Early one morning Huzoor said that during the previous night when he was enabled to pray for the resurgence of Islam in Spain he received the following revelation in Arabic:

آیت مع ترجمہ انگلش میں سورہ طلاق آیت ۲

It clearly pointed out that at the appointed time Islam would once again be dominant in Spain and that, Inshallah, the whole of Spain would come into the fold of Islam and the words of Adhan would resound here.

Departure for Toledo and Madrid

After staying in Granada for two days, Huzoor moved towards Toledo and Madrid. Toledo was the capital when Tariq invaded Spain. Even after Tariq's conquest, Toledo continued to be the capital of the country. Later on, during the Muslim rule the capital was moved to Cordoba and then to Granada. Toledo is situated on top of a bare and desolate hill. At a lower level, a river flows around the town, which provides security like a trench. Even now, in spite of desolation four Mosques still exist. Some Muslim Khalifas had offered Namaz in one of these mosques. Hudur along with his entourage also offered prayer in this mosque. Toledo is a small town, but many tourists visit

this mosque. In the evening, Hudur returned to Madrid and thus this blessed journey came to an end.

Anti-Ahmadiyya Movement In Pakistan and the Role of Ahmadiyya Mission UK

In 1974 Mr Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto held the reigns of power in his hand. A few years earlier, the Jamaat Ahmadiyya had helped his 'People's Party' in the General Election as it was laid down in their Manifesto and Constitution that religion or faith is a personal matter for every individual and the government had no right to interfere in it. Whereas all the other political parties were bitterly opposed to Ahmadiyyat and were not prepared to tolerate even its existence. The Jamaat Ahmadiyya is certainly not a political party but is a wholly religious organization. In its history, as a Jamaat, it has never involved itself in politics. However, on occasion, when Muslim interests were threatened they did enter the field quite openly and courageously. The Jamaat has always protected Muslim interests.

In 1974, in order to further their political aims, some narrow-minded and bigoted Ulema hatched a well thought-out conspiracy against the Ahmadiyya Jamat. On 22nd May 1974, as a first step, a group of Nashtar Medical College students boarded Chanab Express for Rawalpindi. That train was to pass through Rabwah. When their train arrived at the Rabwah station some students got out and started shouting offensive dirty slogans against the Ahmadiyya Jamat. They even tried to humiliate some Ahmadi women. When they re-boarded the train they

announced that on a certain date at that very railway station, they would again teach the Ahmadis a lesson.

So, on their return journey when the train reached Rabwah Station, once again, they ran riot and shouted slogans against the Jamaat in a most provocative manner. Consequently, a scuffle between the students and those Ahmadis who happened to be present at the railway station broke out. As a result of it, people from both the sides received minor injuries.

As this was part of a well-prepared conspiracy, even before the train carrying the students reached Faisalabad, tents and marquees had already been pitched at the railway station. Some bigoted and blinkered Moulvis were busy delivering provocative speeches. They incited the audience by saying ‘since Ahmadis had beaten up the Muslim students and had wounded some of them, it was their duty to wreak vengeance.’

(Detailed account of this incident is a part of the Ahmadiyya History. It is not my intention to delve into the pages of history but merely to record the humble contribution made by the British Jamaat in this regard.)

On the evening of the happening of this event Hadhrat Chaudhry Muhammad Zafrulla Khan and I were having our evening meal when a friend rang up and told us that someone from Nairobi had told him over the phone that there had been a riot at the Rabwah Railway Station. I had not yet finished my conversation when I received another call. Mr Abd-ur Raheem Baig from Karachi told me to advise all the Jamaats of the incident at Rabwah Railway Station which he had learnt directly from the centre at Rabwah. Mr Baig told us that Hadhrat Khalifa-tul-Masih III had directed that the true version of the

incident should be conveyed to the Ahmadi Missions all over the world. He made me write down what he told me verbally. Hadrat Chaudhary was also sitting with me at that time. So I wrote down the whole account given by Mr. Baig and showed it to Chaudhary Sahib. Then I advised all Missions over the phone. It was my good fortune that in those days Mr Abd ul Wahab Adam was assisting me as Deputy Imam. Along with Mr Munirudin Shams he put together a strategy on behalf of the British Ahmadiyya Jamaat. His help to me was invaluable indeed. Sometime around midnight I would receive messages about Jamat. For conveying the messages to others, I would wake him up for his help. I do not have the words to express my gratitude for Mr Wahab's cheerful co-operation and assistance. May Allah reward him abundantly. Amen.

We waited for a few days but the disturbances in Pakistan continued unabated. Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib asked me to find out from Huzoor if we, in England, were permitted to undertake suitable measures. Huzoor permitted us to do what we deemed fit. We were told to make arrangements for permanent contact between London & Rabwah since the means of contact with Rabwah had been severed to a large extent. The next day I called a meeting of the Executive Committee and advised members of Huzoor's instructions in detail. The Executive Committee took some important decisions. So I entrusted this task to Mr. Abdul Lateef Khan President Jamat Hounslow who discharged this responsibility very diligently duly assisted by his assistants and the members of Executive Committee. In this way, we were able to establish permanent contact with Rabwah. Some of the friends who rendered remarkable services in this regard were Mr. Lateef Khan Sahib, Mr Hamidullah

Sahib, Mr. Chaudhary Rashid Ahmad and Mr. Mirza Abdul Rashid. May Allah shower His blessings on all of them. Amen.

Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib decided that details of the maltreatment of Ahmadis and the atrocities being perpetrated on them in Pakistan should be brought to the notice of the British press. He directed me to organize a press conference. I delegated different duties to different members of the Executive Committee and started working for conducting the Press Conference on 6th June 1974. Invitations were sent to the leading newspapers of the UK. A Church Hall in Fleet Street where most of the British Newspapers are based was rented for the purpose. Both Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib and I addressed the Press. Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib advised the audience of the persecution to which Ahmadis were being subjected in Pakistan. He also answered all the questions of the media persons. An appeal was made to the British Government, through the press, that it should lodge a protest to the Government of Pakistan in this regard.

The Press Conference was a success and the following day most of the important newspapers published the news in detail. Some representatives of the Pakistan Embassy and the Pakistani newspapers were also present at the conference. Both the TV and Radio broadcast the news and that too proved effective.

Two days after the Press Conference, a Consular in the Pakistan Embassy invited me to call on him. He seemed terribly offended at our holding the Press Conference. He protested strongly and said that we had projected Pakistan as if preposterous state of affairs prevailed there. With great respect, I said:

“Is it not very peculiar that despite being ill-treated and persecuted, we are not even being permitted to complain? Thousands of Ahmadis living in England have relations in Pakistan. When they hear of the harassment of their near and dear ones, being apprehensive they telephone us and expect us to protest and yet you do not even let us complain. What kind of justice is this?”

He said:

“You must immediately stop the campaign that you have launched in the British newspapers.”

I responded by saying:

“Please arrange to stop the persecution of Ahmadis in Pakistan and on our part, we shall abandon the campaign. You will not then find us lacking in praising the Government of Pakistan. But the fact is that the recent happenings in Pakistan are earning Pakistan a really bad name.”

On my return from the Embassy I told Chaudhry Sahib what had transpired at the meeting with the Consular.

He said:

“I knew the Consular’s father. He was a perfect gentleman and in fact, the Consular himself is also a gentleman. Since he is an employee of the Government of Pakistan, he is perhaps making an attempt to discharge what he regards to be his duty. Otherwise, I don’t think he could really be an opponent of the Jamaat”.

During this turbulent period, Mian Mumtaz Daulatana was the Pakistan's Ambassador in the U.K. His attitude towards the Jamaat was both friendly and sympathetic.

Thousands of Ahmadis residing in England wrote letters to their respective Members of Parliament and this practice continued for quite a while. As a result, a significant number of MPs became aware of the persecution of Ahmadis and they established contact with us. The name of Mr. Tom Cox M.P. appears at the top of the list. To keep himself up-to-date and familiarize himself with the current happenings he would visit me almost every week. He helped us as much as he possibly could. May Allah reward him abundantly! The sympathetic Members of Parliament brought some pressure on the Government of Pakistan and through their letters they asked the Government of Pakistan to stop persecution of Ahmadis. Finally, through an 'Early Day Motion', six Members of Parliament asked the British Government to help redress the difficulties of the Ahmadis in Pakistan. This process yielded agreeable results. الحمد لله

Our campaign through the Press was most successful and forms a part of the History of Ahmadiyyat. Later on I put together a book, consisting of 330 pages, and containing cuttings from the various newspapers that had written on the subject. The book was named 'From the World Press'. It received wide appreciation but now it is not available.

My heart is drenched with prayers for those members of the Jamaat who rendered commendable services during the 1974 occurrences. Some of them are: Ch: Hidayat Ullah Bangvi, Nazeer Ahmad Dar, Abdul Wahab Adam who is currently Amir of the Ahmadiyya

Jamaat in Ghana, Abdul Lateef Khan Sahib who was then President of the Hounslow Jamaat, Hameed Ullah Sahib, Ch: Rasheed Ahmad Sahib, Mirza Abdul Rasheed Sahib of Hounslow, Bashir Ahmad Shaida Sahib of Greenford, Ch: Rashid Ahmad Sahib who was then in-charge of the Press Section, Ghulam Muhammad Chughtai Sahib, Munir ud Deen Shams Sahib currently Additional Wakeel ut Tasneef and Khwaja Rashid ud Deen Qamar Sahib. Last but not the least, Hadhrat Chaudhry Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan Sahib. It was through his guidance, his prayers and his encouragement that all of us were enabled to lend a hand. One cannot possibly forget Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib's contribution towards education and Tarbiyyat of the British Jamaat. In fact, he trained most of those who even today, are privileged to render diligent services for the Jamat. On the top of such a list appears the name of Rafiq Ahmad Hayat, Amir of the Ahmadiyya Jamaat in the U.K. For the education and tarbiyyat of members, in 1965 I started a fortnightly Seminar. Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib and I would regularly address the participants. Some other elderly members of the Jamat also addressed the participants off and on. Some of those who attended the seminars are now rendering significant service to the Jamaat. Amongst them are Rafiq Ahmad Hayat and his younger brother Laeeq Ahmad Hayat. There were many other young men and all of them are servants the Jamat in various capacities. These youngsters can be described as the produce of Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib's prayers and hard work. For the manner in which he devoted attention to my own tarbiyyat, my heart remains flooded with prayers for Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib. I pray to the Almighty that in the life hereafter Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib may be granted proximity of Hadhrat Muhammad

Mustafa ^{s.a.w} and that of the Promised Messiah ^{a.s}. He was indeed an ardent lover of both. Amen. By the time the turbulent storm of 1974 passed away, many Ahmadiis had lost their assets. Dozens of them were martyred and thousands lost their means of livelihood. However, even now, 35 years later when I think of those events, I see a very strange spectacle. The martyrs were granted the status of martyrdom. What else could they ever wish for from Allah? The Almighty has compensated those who lost their assets in diverse ways. The progeny of those who lost their means of livelihood have been blessed with even greater riches.

Currently, hundreds of thousands of those who were persecuted, have migrated to other countries and have been blessed with great prosperity in the countries where they have settled. Beyond their wildest expectations, their children are being educated in some of the best Universities of the world. Had they been living in Pakistan, they could not have achieved such success. Because of their migration, vigorously sound Jamaats have been established in the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, America, Canada and many other European countries. الحمد لله. *Alhamdulillah*.

Tabligh In Poland & My Visit

With Allah's grace, the monthly periodical 'The Muslim Herald' started by me was being sent to several countries of the world. It had become a significant means of propagation of Ahmadiyyat and Islam. In certain countries, some libraries even subscribed to the periodical. I received many letters from the readers every day which included letters from non Muslims also. I received a letter from Imam Zouk who was an Imam of a Mosque and a

leader of the Muslims in Warsaw (Poland). He said that he had seen a copy of 'The Muslim Herald' and was deeply impressed by its contents. He asked for some more literature to be sent to him and requested that his name should be added to the list of subscribers to 'The Muslim Herald'. He admitted that he did not know much English but a dear friend who lived in the adjoining flat knew English really well. He said that his friend had already translated various articles in the periodical into Polish for him. He also said that his friend was interested in Islam. I added Imam Zouk's name to the list of subscribers and sent him some literature.

Fortunately, around that time, through the Rotary Club, I met an Englishman, Mr Mark, who was well versed in the Polish language. He promised that he would translate my letters into Polish. That is how Imam Zouk and I started corresponding with each other in Polish. For my benefit, Mr Mark would translate the letters written to me in Polish. This state of affairs continued for a while and slowly Imam Zouk was introduced to Ahmadiyyat. A little later he invited me to visit Poland and said that on my arrival he would arrange for some Christian and Muslim scholars to meet me. I forwarded Imam Zouk's letter to Hadhrat Khalifa tul Masih III who instructed me to take advantage of this opportunity. Therefore I traveled to Warsaw on 20th may 1976 and was received by Imam Zouk at the Airport. I stayed at the Grand Hotel and the following day we had a long detailed discussion at his residence. His neighbor, who knew English well acted as an interpreter. Our meeting continued late into the night. Earlier on Imam Zouk had prepared a lengthy list of questions that he wished to ask. With Allah's Grace I was able to answer all his questions to his satisfaction. In the

evening, in the company of the Imam and his interpreter friend, I went sight seeing. He, for the most part, showed me that section of Warsaw, which had been destroyed by Hitler during the Second World War. There was no trace of any of the old buildings. However, at the end of the war, the residents of Warsaw collected donations and restored that part of the town to its former glory. As a result, there was no trace of war on any of the buildings. I was deeply impressed and felt convinced that if any people rise with determination, no power on earth could annihilate them.

After a few days' discussion, Imam Zouk accepted Ahmadiyyat. He filled the Ba'it form and signed it. At that time, Imam Zouk was one of the six Imams in Poland. Since he was the Imam of the Mosque in Warsaw and was a learned person, he was considered more important than the others. He was born in a Christian family. He came across a copy of the Holy Quran when he was studying in an academy to be a Christian priest. On the study of the Holy Quran, he accepted Islam. In this way, instead of a cleric he became Imam of a Mosque and later on the Almighty directed him towards Ahmadiyyat. الحمد لله

Imam Zouk had the good fortune to visit Rabwah in 1978, where he had the honor of meeting Hadhrat Khalifa tul Masih III. By the Grace of Allah, the Ahmadiyya Jamaat has now been regularly registered in Poland and a Central Missionary is posted there.

International Conference on the Deliverance of Jesus from the Cross held in London

In May 1977, I read in the papers that throughout the year 1978 various Christian organizations would research about the authenticity of the 'Shroud' and in this regard a seminar would be held.

This sacred shroud is safely lodged in central church in Turin in Italy. It seems significant that, when it was photographed for the first time in the middle of the 19th century, someone noticed that the hands and feet had been injured and bloodstains from his ribs were visible. According to the belief of the Ahmadis, this is an image of Jesus Christ. The dripping, trickling or oozing of the blood on the cloth is a manifest proof that the heart of the person who was wrapped in this Shroud was still pumping. According to Christian belief and research this cloth was used as a shroud and Jesus Christ was wrapped in it after he was taken down from the cross.

If it is proved that this shroud is the same in which Jesus Christ was wrapped up, we can say with certainty that his heart was functioning and he was alive even after being put in the sepulcher.

On perusal of the reports of the Shroud in the newspapers and as the year 1978 was chosen for research I wrote to Hadrat Khalifatul Massih III and suggested that advantage could be taken of this happening and the British Jamaat may be permitted to hold an International Conference on the subject of 'The Deliverance of Jesus from the Cross'. I requested Hudur to grace the conference with his presence.

Hudur accepted my request and instructed me to visit Rabwah for a week for further consultations.

I appraised the Executive Committee of Hudur's permission for the conference and also of his participation in it. The Executive Committee held detailed discussions regarding the arrangements of the conference. Thereafter with the suggestions given by the Executive Committee I went to Rabwah and submitted the report. The next day Hudur called for Wakeel-ul Tabsheer Sahib for consultations. Hudur granted the permission for holding the conference and also sanctioned the budget for it. He approved the proposed program for the conference.

On my return to London, I informed the Executive Committee of the detailed program of the conference. A committee was constituted to oversee the arrangements of the conference and it was decided that the conference would be held on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th June 1978.

This conference was widely publicized in the TV, Radio and leading newspapers of London. We published an advertisement a few times in The Times London explaining the aims and objective of this conference with a brief introduction of the Ahmadiyya Jamat and inviting people to attend it. I was also called by the Birmingham Television to give a talk about this conference. Dozens of newspapers and periodicals published our interviews. The radio also broadcast news and our interviews about the conference several times.

The Jung London in its issue of 7th December 1977 published the following news with the picture of tomb of Jesus Christ situated in Mohalla Khanyar.

Jesus Christ lies buried in Srinagar
Claims Jamat Ahmadiyya Britain

London (Jung correspondent) The British chapter of Jamat Ahmadiyya is organizing an International Conference next year from 2nd to 4th June. The historian and scholars of the Jamat would try to prove their faith that Jesus Christ was certainly crucified but he did not die on the Cross, rather he lived a full life and died a natural death in Srinagar (Kashmir – India). His tomb is still there. This surprising disclosure was given by Mr. Bashir Ahmad Rafiq an Imam of the Ahmadiyya Masjid London in a press conference held on Friday in Wald Wolf Hotel. A photograph of the alleged tomb was also distributed in the conference. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad the Founder of Qadiani sect made a mention of this tomb in his book 'Masih Hindustan Mein' (Jesus In India). The Imam added that with this conference the Jamat Ahmadiyya has launched its worldwide program of Tabligh. He also said that the sect has about one crore adherents in the world out of which ten thousand are in the Britain.

The Catholic Herald, a widely circulated paper in Britain, published the following news in its issue 9th December 1977

Muslim Sect with Doubts about Christ

Britain is a field ripe for conversion to Islam according to Imam Rafiq the leader of the Ahmadiyya Muslim sect in this country.

A nation wide crusade to be launched next year culminating in an International

Conference in London which will take as its theme, "The Deliverance of Jesus from the Cross."

Speaking at the launch of the crusade, Mr. Rafiq explained that the Ahmadiyyas felt it was time to bring Europe and America back to a living communion with God. He felt Christianity had failed to do this.

The Ahmadiyya claim that their beliefs are synonymous with Islam, but many would disagree with that view. Of the 2000000 Muslims in Britain only 11000 are Ahmadiyyas. In Pakistan the sect has been declared "Non-Muslim".

The belief which will be promulgated throughout Britain next year by sermons from doorstep missionaries and the distribution of Ahmadiyya literature differ from main line Islam as well as Christianity.

They believe that our Lord and Mohammad were just human prophets who have now been outshone by the 18th century Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, whom they revere as the Promised Messiah. Since main line Muslims admit the humanity of Mohammad, the Ahmadiyya concentrate on disapproving the divinity of Christ.

They have taken great interest in the Turin Shroud which they hope will prove conclusively that Jesus was alive when he was taken down from the Cross. They allege that after Jesus had been cared for by his apostles,

he went to India in search of the Lost Tribes of Israel.

Their most tangible evidence is an ancient tomb in Kashmir which they say has been confirmed by archaeological excavation although they refuse to allow the tomb to be opened on the grounds that such action would be contrary to Muslim law.

They identify the Tomb as the resting place of Yus Asaph which they claim is the Arabic form of “Jesus – The Gatherer” although the Koranic form or our Lord name is Aisa.

The Ahmadiyyas are as optimistic as they are evangelical. Missionaries have been sent to places as unlikely as Rome and Israel. They believe they will succeed in effecting their founder’s prophecy of International acceptance of Ahmadiyya Islam.

Each convert undertakes to give 16 percent of his income to a central fund to finance schools, printing presses and scholarships.”

A number of newspapers of England and Europe published news regarding this conference. The radio and television broadcast our interviews and so this conference was received wide publicity. The correspondents of Birmingham and Dillingham TV also broadcast my interviews. Similarly radio LBC and BBC broadcast my interviews. In this way, by the grace of Allah the conference received wide publicity even before it was held and the belief of Jamat Ahmadiyya that ‘Jesus Christ was delivered from the Cross’ was widely publicized.

The popular Radio4 also broadcast my interview and thus our message was conveyed to millions of people. *Alhamdolillah.*

The Daily Telegraph, a most widely read newspaper published from London which has its daily circulation over a million, asked me to provide them with necessary material so that they might produce a special issue in the Sunday magazine. This was a great opportunity for me. So, in December 1977 when I was to leave for Rabwah to attend the Jalsa Salana I requested Hudur to grant me permission to bring correspondents of some newspapers along with me as this would enable us to publicize this conference. We would also present their research during the conference. Therefore invitations were sent to the leading newspapers of England. At last, a most popular and widely circulated newspaper of England "The Sunday Telegraph" agreed to send one correspondent and a photographer on this tour to Rabwah on the condition that they would bear the travel expenses of both the representatives.

Hudur kindly granted his permission. So, I reached Rabwah on the appointed day along with a photographer and Mr. Philip, the news correspondent.

Hudur kindly gave an interview to Mr. Philip in which he described in detail how Jesus Christ escaped death on the Cross and traveled to Kashmir and was later buried there. Hudur said to them:

"You are the representative of an independent newspaper of an independent country. Bashir Ahmad Rafiq will assist you and will take care of you. You are free to conduct your research independently."

These representatives participated in the Jalsa Salana and had the opportunity to meet and talk to the scholars and elderly people of the Jamat. They took many photographs of the Jalsa and were very impressed with the administration and arrangements.

We left for Qadian via Lahore after the Jalsa. Hadrat Sahibzada Mirza Waseem Ahmad Sahib was already informed of our arrival. So a delegation from Qadian received us at the border. We stayed three to four days in Qadian. Mr. Philip was shown all the historical places of Qadian and all his questions were answered to his satisfaction.

From Qadian, we went to Amritsar and from there by an Air India flight we left for Srinagar. At the Srinagar airport Janab Ghulam Nabi Sahib the missionary in-charge received us. Some press correspondents were also with him. During our brief interview, we told them the main objective of our visit and promised to hold a press conference after the completion of our visit.

In Srinagar, we stayed at the Hotel Oberoi. Before Partition it was the palace of Maharaja. It is a spacious and a large building situated at the bank of Dull Lake. From the hotel one could have an exquisite and fascinating view of the Dull Lake. The following day in the company of Janab Ghulam Nabi Sahib we set out for Mohallah Khanyar to visit the sacred tomb of Jesus Christ. For the last 1900 years, it has been the center of attraction for the people. The local people called it the tomb of the prophet Yuz Asaph. The grave is made in the Jewish style. It has an underground sepulcher with the provision of a small window. The actual grave lies in this sepulcher. The direction of the grave is East West which shows the style Jewish tradition. Another strong proof of it being the grave

of Jesus Christ is that on a stone lying near this grave people have been lighting a candle for years and the melted wax continued to get deposited on the stone. A few years ago, when research was being carried out about this grave, this deposit was removed. On its removal, it was observed that the prints of the feet of Jesus Christ were carved on the stone. It is noteworthy that the people who got engraved these prints on the stone also ensured that the prints of injuries also appeared on the feet. This is a convincing proof that people of that era held the belief that the person who was lying in this grave was crucified. Otherwise they would not have got engraved the prints of injuries on his feet. When we reached the tomb, no-body was there. After a while a person came to us. He told us that he was the caretaker of that tomb. He opened the door and we entered it. Mr. Philip described our visit to the tomb in the Sunday Telegraph magazine dated 4th July 1978. He wrote:

It was an experience to make even a casual Church of England **back slider** feel deeply uneasy. A taxi had taken me from the most extravagant hotel in Kashmir to a crossroads in one of the poorest areas in Srinagar the capital. Cows, goats and children struggled through the mud and worse. On one corner was a small booth which served as a butcher's shop. On another was a two storey house which turned out to be a factory serving the trinket trade.

Opposite them in the corner of a disused crematory occupied by fierce stray dogs was a small white building with a corrugated iron

roof. "There you are," said my guide. "The Tomb of Jesus Christ."

We entered the mausoleum. Inside the mausoleum there are two graves enclosed in an iron enclosure. One is of the Jesus Christ and the other is of a Muslim Saint Syed Nasiruddin Sahib who lived in the 15th century. He was very impressed with the teachings of the prophet Hadrat Yuz Asaph. He, therefore, wished that he should be buried adjacent to the grave of Hadrat Yuz Asaph.

On our request the caretaker allowed us to go into the iron enclosure. It was dark inside. So the caretaker lighted candles. Standing at the head of the grave I offered intense prayers in these words:

"O My Lord! This is the grave of your exalted prophet who came into the world to spread the message of oneness of God and struggled all his life to eradicate the practice of idolatry from the Jewish tribes. Today his followers are deeply indulged in associating partners with God in his name and they have equated this pious man with God. This practice of his followers might indeed be causing pain to his soul. O My Lord! Create such circumstances as to establish this truth as clear as noon day that he was taken off alive from the cross and was buried here. Idolatrous practices may be vanished from this world and his followers in particular may be drawn towards the oneness of God and Your decree, that through the Promised Messiah^{a.s} deliverance of Jesus from the Cross would be known to the world, may see its glorious fulfillment. Amen."

When I finished with my supplications, Mr. Philip requested that he should be allowed to take some photographs. The caretaker granted his request with pleasure so we took the photographs of the Tome of Jesus and the stones on which were engraved the injured feet of Jesus Christ. (These photographs can be seen in the Khilafat Library.

The Archeological Department of Kashmir has erected an epitaph on the grave which bears these words:

“This is the Tomb of Prophet Yuz Asaph who, traveling through various countries, reached here hundreds of years ago and spent all his life in worship and propagating the message of God.”

There is much evidence to prove that Yuz Asaph and Jesus Christ are the names of one and the same person. Here I give evidence:

Sir Francis Younghusband, a British resident who spent a long time in Kashmir writes:

“There resided in Kashmir some 1900 years ago a saint of the name of Yaz Asaph who preached in parables and used many of the same parables as Christ used, as for instance the parable of the Sower. His tomb is in Srinagar and the theory is that Yuz Asaph and Jesus are one and the same person. When the people are in appearance of such a decided Jewish Cast it is curious that such a theory should exist.”

(Sir Francis Younghusband, Page 112)

“Jesus In India” a book authored by the Promised Messiah a.s about the arrival of Jesus Christ in Kashmir and his grave, is worth reading.

When we came out of the mausoleum, Mr. Philip pointed towards an elderly Kashmiri person who was approaching us. Mr. Philip expressed his desire to talk to him and he asked me to act as an interpreter. The caretaker of The Tomb who knew English was a witness to our conversation with that elderly Kashmiri person. Our conversation went like this:

Mr. Philip: How old are you and how long have you been settled in Srinagar?

Old Man: I am above 80 and I was born in Srinagar and have spent my whole life here.

Mr. Philip: What do you know about this Tomb?

Old Man: This is the grave of the Prophet Yuz Asaph who, as the tradition goes, came to Kashmir 1900 years ago from a distant country and spent most of his time praying to God and imparting spiritual advice to the local people. I have also heard that when he died he was over 100.

Mr. Philip: Please let us know your knowledge about this Tomb?

Old Man: The actual grave lies in the basement. It had a window opening towards the street outside which has now been closed. A special kind of fragrance emitted from this window. People would put their hands into the window and when they took out them the fragrance would linger on their hand the whole

day. The people also believe that whatever prayers are offered at the grave is accepted by God.

We returned to our hotel after visiting the Tomb of Jesus. In the evening, I rang up Mr. Fida Husnain a Professor in the University of Kashmir, and well versed in archeology. He has done considerable research on the Tomb of Jesus and has authored many books on the subject. He does not belong to the Ahmadiyya Jamat. Answering my call, he told me that he had known about our visit through the newspapers and he himself was willing to meet us. So we decided to meet at a restaurant in the evening.

In the evening, when the three of us reached the restaurant we found Mr. Fida waiting for us. He is a very polite man with a cheerful countenance. He told us about the Tomb of Jesus Christ in detail and said that in his writings he had proved this to be the Tomb of Jesus Christ. During our conversation Mr. Fida paid rich and glowing tribute to the Promised Messiah a.s and admitted that the basic research was done by Hadrat Sahib and all others only followed his footsteps. Our meeting with him was very informative, interesting and soul-inspiring. Mr. Philip also looked very impressed.

Thereafter I met Mr. Fida Husain a number of times in London. During one his visits to London, he stayed with us for three days. I also took him to Hadrat Khalifatul Massih IVth. He presented his latest book "The Fifth Gospel" to Hudur. Dedicating this book to the Promised Messiah a.s, he has paid a glorious tribute to the Promised Messiah a.s for his research on the Tomb of Jesus. The book contains the photograph of the Promised Messiah on its first page.

For the next three or four days, Mr. Philip and the photographer remained busy meeting different people in connection with their research. During this period, on invitation from the Jamat I went on to tour a couple of Jamats outside Srinagar and addressed their members. It was really faith inspiring tour. I was moved to tears to see the high standard of devotion, zeal and zest for Ahmadiyyat and the deep attachment with the Khilafat of the members of Jamat.

Though they were poor in worldly means and were shivering with cold due to lack of proper warm clothes, yet their hearts were imbued with the warmth of faith.

We returned to Pakistan via Qadian after completing our week long tour to Srinagar. We also went for sight-seeing in Srinagar. We saw the magnificent and panoramic view of the Dull Lake with boats floating on it. We could not but be impressed and were obliged to admit that the scenery of Kashmir is the most spectacular in the world.

The following year in June, the proposed conference was held. On this occasion, Mr. Philip published a detail article with photographs in the Sunday edition of 6th June 1978. One million copies were published and some other newspapers of the world also produced main features of this article in their editions. In his article, Mr. Philip made a mention of me in the following words:

“There had been an Ahmadi mosque in Britain, the imperial homeland since 1924. It is situated in Gressenhall Road, south west London, and has small branches throughout Britain, with a strength of about 10,000. The Imam Mr. B.A Rafiq is a charming and

cultivated man whose landowning family used to fight the British in the North West Frontier area.”

**Participation of
Hadrat Khaifatul Messiah IIIrd
In the conference of
The Deliverance of Jesus from the Cross.**

In May 1978, Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IIIrd arrived in London to participate in the conference and with Hudur's arrival Ahmadies from all over the world began to throng London.

The Executive Committee and the other members of the UK Jamat and the members of Conference Committee put in their hard work to complete the arrangements of the conference. All of them exhibited high standard of teamwork. May Allah bestow his blessings on all of them. Amen.

At the Heathrow airport, Hudur addressed a Press Conference and answered the questions of the news correspondents. In a way, this was the beginning of the main Conference. Some Christian scholars also addressed the conference. A noted archeologist and researcher of Kashmir, Mr. Fida Husnain, was also to read his paper in the conference but he could not get the visa in time. So someone else read his paper on his behalf. The concluding day of the conference 4th June 1978 was a Sunday. The Sunday Telegraph published a six page supplement about the conference with many photographs. Besides the scenes of Jalsa Salana Rabwah, it also included the photographs of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IIIrd, Chaudhary Zafarullah

Khan Sahib and the Tomb of Jesus. More than one million copies of this supplement were published.

My Umras

On two different occasions, the Almighty God has enabled Saleema and me to visit the land of our beloved Prophet. He enabled us to present ourselves at his grave. Before writing about our journeys, I would particularly wish to record my gratitude to my son in law Dr. Abdul Waheed Khan and my daughter Amatul Naseer (Neeno). It was through their initiative, help and prayers that I was enabled to perform Umra on two different occasions. They made all the necessary arrangements that enabled all of us to perform Umra together. In that journey, my grandchildren Madeeha, Humayun, and Alia also accompanied us. Humayun Khan in particular remained close to me and took care of my smallest needs with great pleasure. May Allah shower all of them with His blessings and bestow on them all kinds of worldly and spiritual gifts.

On both occasions, we undertook our journeys in the middle of the month of December. Our hearts were overflowing with strange sentiments in that the Almighty had granted us the ability to undertake a journey for which I had been longing for throughout my life. We landed at Jeddah International Airport and stepped out onto the sacred land of Hijaz. As this was the very soil where the Holy Prophet Hadrat Muhammad, Peace and Blessings be upon him, was born, grew up and was gifted with the mantle of prophethood, our viewpoint underwent a sudden change. In a matter of 23 years the Holy Prophet brought about phenomenal changes. In that period the world witnessed a spiritual upheaval that resulted in a complete revolution.

The revolution covered not only Najad and Hijaz but also the entire world. His teachings enlightened the dark world and once again, the dignity of humanity was established.

This is the very land where the very first House of Allah was built - the house which the Almighty Himself referred to as 'Ba'it ul Ateeq' i.e. a very antique house. He made it obligatory on the financially well to do Muslims to pay a pilgrimage to it which is known as 'Hajj'.

Mr. Malik Bashir ud Deen and our dear friend Mr. Tahir Safeer were present at the Airport to welcome us. Mr. Malik Bashir-ud-deen had been residing in Jeddah for the past 22 years (since then he has moved away from Saudi Arabia). He has a very cheerful personality and in the matter of hospitality, he has no equal. Whoever met him once became extremely fond of him. Because of his naturally admirable attributes, he has generated a very large circle of friends. Tahir Safeer grew up in London before my eyes and we were therefore together in London for a long period. I was very close to his father Dr. Safeer ud Deen. The family can be described as an epitome of love, affection and sincerity.

When, along with our hosts we left Jeddah Airport we found that the whole town was brilliantly lit. On arrival at Tahir Safeer's residence we discovered that his wife had prepared a sumptuous meal. A good wife is indeed a very great gift from God. Both Mr. Malik Bashir ud Deen and Mr. Tahir Safeer are fortunate enough to be blessed with this gift.

Jeddah is a beautiful modern and attractive town. High rise buildings, wide roads and the Marine Drive along the coast, which is the longest in the world, further,

enhance its splendor and charm. There are many large and beautiful Shopping Malls in the town.

The following day, at the advice of Mr. Malik Bashiruddin and Mr. Tahir Safeer we set out for Umra from Jeddah after Asar prayer so that we might perform Umra in the relatively cool part of the day. We took bath and put on 'Ihram'. Then we moved towards Mecca. My wife and I travelled in Malik Sahib's car while Dr. Abdul Waheed Khan, Neeno and their children rode in another car. Before commencing our journey, we offered a collective silent prayer. On the way, Malik Sahib remained engaged giving us a running commentary of the places we were passing through. By the Grace of Allah, he had been able to perform Hajj and Umra on numerous occasions. Therefore, he had become a walking encyclopedia. Mecca is situated at a distance of 45 kilometers from Jeddah. At one time, this distance was covered either on foot or on camels and it took the pilgrims at least two days to reach Mecca. Now, in roomy air-conditioned beautiful cars, this journey can be completed in a matter of 45 minutes.

As soon as the caravan was under way, all of us started reciting Talbia aloud i.e.

Here O'Lord I am present ...

As our car had Saudi number plates, we were not stopped for checks anywhere on the way and we entered the Holy city of Mecca. At a very short distance from Haram Shareef, we booked into the Kaki Hotel. It is fully air-conditioned a six-storied building equipped with all modern facilities. We placed our luggage in our room, took bath again and proceeded towards *Baitullah* wearing 'Ihram'. Although the sun had set, the House of Allah was so brilliantly lit that it seemed daytime. We felt as if we were proceeding towards a vast sea of lights. Because of

the excitement, our hearts were racing and we were invoking *Durood*. It is stated in a *Hadeeth* that the Almighty accepts the supplication offered when the House of Allah is first sighted. In my heart, I had a whole collection of prayers and I could not decide what to ask and what not to. I said:

“I am always in need and helpless and have empty wallet. O My Lord, I need your help at every step.”

Engrossed in these thoughts, when I first caught sight of the House of Allah I began to tremble, my heart overwhelmed with emotion and I was shedding tears. It was a strange form of elation. At that moment, I recalled an incident experienced by Hadhrat Maulana Noor ud Deen, Khalifatul Masih 1. When he first saw the House of Allah, he supplicated in these terms:

“O My Lord, I am in need of your help all the time and my heart is overflowing with supplications. Therefore grant acceptance to my prayers whenever I supplicate. Indeed only You are Self-sufficient and I am a beggar.”

I supplicated in a similar manner and I am sure that my prayer was accepted. Haram Shareef has five entrances and one can enter through any one of them. As our hotel was in the direction of Bab Abd ul Azeez, we entered through that gate. Deeply occupied in prayers, with moist eyes we approached the House of Allah. The floor on which we walked was made of marble. It was cool and comfortable even in the extreme heat. At one time, there was just gravel around the House of Allah. Because of the heat of the day, it became as hot as live embers. Therefore, the feet of Hajis who performed circuits were often injured.

Performing circuits around the House of Allah was an emotional experience. Every eye was shedding tears and the sound of *Durood* and *Salaam* seemed like intoxicating music. We entered the holiest of the holy places and reached the corner in which the *Hajr e Aswad* 'Black stone' is installed. There is a white line opposite the black stone from where one begins the circuits. Whether it is day or night, every single hour, approximately four to five hundred people always remain engaged in the performance of circuits. The number is further enhanced in the evenings.

We also stood opposite the black stone and blew a kiss towards it. Because of the crowd, it was impossible to actually kiss the stone. When I had performed the circuits, Malik Bashir ud Deen said that he could arrange for me to kiss the stone. He is indeed a strong man. He held my hand and took me close to the black stone. He safeguarded my head and thus I was enabled to kiss the stone to my heart's content. I thanked the Almighty. I could not contain my happiness as I knew that other than the Black Stone nothing exists in this world that had actually touched the lips of Hadhrat Muhammad Mustafa (saw). There is not the slightest doubt that he had kissed the black stone a number of times. In a way, my lips touching the stone was practically the same as kissing the Holy Prophet himself. This thought threw me in a state of ecstasy.

One is required to perform seven circuits during which one can either supplicate in Arabic or in one's own language. Here again Mr. Malik Bashir ud Deen proved a guardian angel for us. As he had memorised the correlated prayers in Arabic, he kept on reciting them aloud and we repeated after him. During the performance of circuits one is filled with emotions that his prayers are being accepted.

We offered special supplication for the universal victory of Islam and Ahmadiyyat and for our parents and near and dear ones and the Muslim community the world over. During the circuits I witnessed some sights which moved me to tears. An African lady who was unable to walk was crawling to perform a circuit. In a way, this setting was distressing.

After having performed seven circuits, the Holy Prophet used to offer two Nawafil near 'Maqam e Ibrahim'. We too offered two Nawafil there and then, following the example of the Holy Prophet, had our fill of water from the Zamzam.

Refreshing ourselves with the holy water of Zamzam, we moved towards the Safa and Marwa hillocks. Passing through Baab us Safa we walked between Safa and Marwa seven times. The first trip begins from Safa and ends at Marwa.

At one time, walking between Safa and Marwa injured the feet of the pilgrims. The whole passage was then covered with gravel and during the heat of the day; the gravel became extremely hot. However, now the whole passage has a roof and it has been air- conditioned. Now such marble has been laid on the floor as remains cool even in the blazing sun.

Even during the walk 'Sayee' between the two hillocks our eyes were moist and we begged from the Almighty for whatever we could think of. Similar was the condition of Dr. Abdul Waheed Khan and my other companions. They too were overwhelmed with emotion. For Humayun, Madeeha and Alia it was a strange faith raising and fascinating experience.

In accordance with the practice of the Holy Prophet, at the end of Sayee we also had our haircut. In

this manner, by the Grace of Allah, we finished our Umra. We stayed on in Mecca for the next few days during which we were able to perform further Umras.

The Almighty additionally blessed us in that Brother Shahid Ahmad Bengali had also come for Umra from Damam. He is employed in a factory in Damam. (Now he has left Saudi Arabia) He is a devoted Ahmadi and had performed Umra many times. He is fluent in Arabic and for us his being there was like the presence of an 'Angel of Mercy'. He was staying in the same Hotel. As he had performed Hajj and Umra on many occasions, he was an excellent guide for us. In his desire to serve us and show hospitality towards us he left no stone unturned. His wife became intimate with the ladies in our group. Guided by him we were able to visit all the historical locations and were enchanted at his running commentary.

The Cave of Hira is situated at a distance of approximately 5 miles from Mecca. Neither Salima nor I could climb up to the cave and I wished we had attempted an Umra in our younger days. However, Dr. Abdul Waheed, Neeno, Madeeha, Alia and Humayun, along with Shahid Ahmad decided to climb up to the cave early in the morning. They took their water bottles with them. Shahid Ahmad had, on many earlier occasions been blessed with opportunities to visit the cave. The Cave of Hira is that Holy place where the last *Shariyat* (Law) was revealed to the Holy Prophet of Islam SAW.

When Dr. Abdul Waheed, Neeno and the children came back to the hotel from the Cave of Hira their faces were lit with pleasure and delight. It seemed as if they had acquired an invaluable treasure.

One of the worth-visiting places in Mecca is the birthplace of the Holy Prophet SAW. At present, a

Madarsa is established at this place. The path leading to the cave of *Thaur* where the Holy Prophet SAW spent three nights during his migration to Madina is very difficult to tread. The previous year some Hajis lost their lives while ascending this cave. Therefore, the government has now prohibited an ascent. We stood at the base and prayed. We also visited the Plain of Arafat.

After spending a few days in Mecca, we proceeded towards Medina. Having started from Mecca early in the morning we reached Medina in time for Zuhr. Along the route, we could only see rock-strewn fields but the road was wide and the taxis were comfortable and air-conditioned.

When we arrived at Medina, we found Brother Abd ur Razzaq waiting for us. He had reserved accommodation for us in a hotel quite close to the Mosque of the Holy Prophet. Abd ur had lived in Medina for the past 18 years. He has vast business interests there. He is very sincere and loving. Soon after our arrival in Medina, he announced that although we would live in the Hotel he would provide meals for us. I insisted that we could eat in the hotel but he would not agree. May Allah reward him abundantly. Amen.

Abd ur Razzaq told us that he would return in a matter of two hours and take us to the Holy Prophet's Mosque. He said that in the meantime we could take a bath and relax. When we were ready for the move, we waited somewhat impatiently for Abd ur Razzaq to appear. We were so keenly looking forward to presenting ourselves at the mausoleum of the Holy Prophet (saw). That the moment of realisation of our dreams throughout our lives was drawing near made us edgy.

Compared with Mecca, Medina is a lot more green and fertile and the weather is relatively pleasant. Only at night one had to cover oneself with a sheet or a blanket.

Guided by Abd ur Razzaq we reached Mosque of the Holy Prophet. The Asar prayer had already been offered in the Mosque. As there were quite a few in our group, I led the Asar prayer and many others also joined in. The Mosque of the Holy Prophet had recently been extended and its appearance and grandeur beggars description.

After a visit to the Mosque of the Holy Prophet, we proceeded towards the holiest Mausoleum. It is impossible to express our feelings at that time in words. There was a sea of humanity around the mausoleum. Therefore, we started supplicating and lost track of time. Perhaps, for a whole hour, we remained engaged in presenting our sincere and devoted sentiments before our master.

We were blessed with opportunities to offer all five obligatory prayers and *Tahajjud* in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet and we were able to visit the mausoleum on several occasions. We were able to pray there and invoke *Durood* and *Salaam*.

We spent the next few days visiting other places of interest such as the battlefield of *Uhud*, the *Quba* Mosque, the Mosque of Two *Qiblas* and the place where the trench was dug where there is now a Mosque.

I have written another book covering my journeys of *Umra* which will, Inshallah, be published soon. In it I have made an attempt to relate further details.

It may be appropriate to mention here a faith-inspiring episode. It enhanced my faith and that of my children. One can be reassured from this experience that not only does the Almighty hear our prayers but, if He so

wills also accepts them. In this way, proof is provided that He maintains a living relationship with His creation and a positive proof of His existence becomes evident.

Before proceeding for Umra, I was suffering from a serious illness. At the end of 1978, I suffered from a bout of depression and acute anxiety. The interval between attacks kept on decreasing. I felt that my heart was sinking and I did not have a moment's peace of mind. For long periods, I would continue walking up and down and the depression made me very helpless. Finally, I sought medical help and was prescribed anti depressant medicines, which resulted in giddiness but brought no real relief. I also tried Homeopathic and Greek medicines but even then, the problem kept on aggravating. I was so frightened by this illness that I even hesitated to step out of the house or undertake even a short journey. I would suffocate in closed rooms. Often the attacks occurred during the night and I had to spend the whole night remaining awake, pacing up and down both inside and outside the house. During this period, my wife looked after me all the time.

In the year I was to proceed for Umra. I made up my mind that at the first sight of the House of Allah and then later on during the circuits and walks between Safa and Marwa all my prayers would be centered on a plea to be rid of this predicament. I asked my wife also to particularly pray for my malaise. By then I had become despondent. During the circuits, the visits to the Mosque of the Holy Prophet and his mausoleum I supplicated with great humility and compassion that I may be rid of this grievous illness.

After Umra, we proceeded to Pakistan. We also visited Qadian for a few days. There in the 'Bait ud Dua'

during one night, I was again enabled to pray in great anguish.

I do not have the words to express my gratitude to the Almighty as while still in Qadian I saw in a dream that someone said to me:

“The Almighty has accepted your prayers and now you will never suffer another attack of depression.”

I related this dream to Salima in the morning and I expressed my gratitude to the Almighty. I swear by Him that since that day I have never had any depression.

Salima is my witness. While in a Hospital, the night before my open-heart surgery, a nurse gave me a pill to swallow. I asked her what it was for, she said that during the night prior to an operation one becomes extremely anxious, and this pill induces to sleep. I told her that I was not in the least anxious. I did not take that pill yet I had a sound sleep. Before the operation while I was still on a stretcher the same nurse said to me:

“In such circumstances most people are deeply concerned and you are not in the least fretful.”

My brother, Col. Nazir Ahmad, came to me and gently rubbed my hand and comforted me. I cannot recall as I was fully under sedation, but later on, my brother told me that at that time I recited the following couplet composed by Hadhrat Musleh Maood:

“Whether we are recipient of Your mercy or under a trial, we are contented in any circumstance in which You are pleased”.

I always advise my children never to neglect prayer. It is a very potent weapon. It also results in tranquility. It can solve the most difficult problems.

Whether by day or night, there are blessings in it. It is not necessary to pray aloud or even move your tongue. One should train oneself to pray all the time. The Promised Messiah has said:

“Your hand may be engaged in any task
but your heart should be engaged in the
remembrance of the Beloved.”

It implies that one can remain engaged in any task as long as one's heart is filled with the remembrance of Allah. Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib once said to me that while the first astronaut was in space I remained in a prayerful mood and kept on praying for his safe return. What he meant to say was that although words were not emerging from his lips, throughout that period he was in a way supplicating for the safe return of the astronaut. May our hearts and souls be enriched with the blessings of prayers.

My Visit to Dera Baba Nanak

In 1991, the Centenary Annual Convention (Jalsa) of the Jamaat Ahmadiyya was held in Qadian. Hadhrat Khalifa tul Masih IV himself traveled to Qadian to participate in that blessed event. I was privileged to accompany Hudur as Hudur had very kindly included me in his entourage. We flew to Delhi on the appointed date and after a few days' stay there, traveled by train to Qadian via Amritsar and Batala. After partition of the sub-continent, this was the first visit of any Khalifa tul Masih to Qadian. Therefore, for every person i.e. Hudur, members of his entourage and every resident of Qadian, it was an extremely sentimental occasion. Even after the partition of the sub-continent, I had been privileged to visit Qadian on a number of occasions. However, this journey was totally different and unique. Thousands of Ahmadis

from Pakistan and the rest of the world had the good fortune to attend the Jalsa. Mr Hadi Ali Chaudhry has covered this journey in some detail in a book. Here, it is not my intention to describe the historic occasion. Therefore, I move on to describe our visit to Dera Baba Nanak to pay homage to the 'Holy Cloak'.

A day after the conclusion of the Jalsa, I asked Fazl Ilahi Khan Sahib, a 'Dervesh' of Qadian, if it would be possible to visit Dera Baba Nanak to pay homage to the Holy Cloak presuming Hudur granted me permission. He said that he saw no difficulty in arranging a visit but he told me that it might not be possible to view the Holy Cloak as it always remains secured in a casket and covered with expensive fabrics. Some very rich Sikh people bring the fabrics for the specific purpose of covering the casket. Visitors and pilgrims are allowed to view the casket only. Since the Holy cloak is 500 years old, for fear that it might get torn or soiled, it is kept in a folded condition.

I said that visiting the holy cloak had become doubly significant and blessed for us as on 30th September 1895 the Promised Messiah (pbuh), along with ten of his companions had undertaken a journey to Dera Baba Nanak to examine the holy cloak. I said that even viewing only the casket would be a great privilege and source of blessings.

The next day I sought permission from Hadhrat Khalifa tul Masih IV to allow to Mr Fazl Ilahi Khan and me to travel to Dera Baba Nanak to view the cloak. Hudur very kindly granted permission and requested Sahibzada Mirza Waseem Ahmad Nazir e Aala Qadian to make the necessary arrangements. On the following day, Mr Hadi Ali Chaudhry also expressed his desire to come along with us. Early in the morning, we travelled to Dera Baba Nanak

by car. Mr Fazl Ilahi Khan persuaded a Sikh Advocate, a descendent of Guru Baba Nanak, to accompany us. We reached Dera Baba Nanak around 11 a.m. Before I narrate any further details, it seems appropriate that I should record something in regard to the holy cloak.

It is written in the Holy books of the Sikhs that Hadhrat Baba Nanak received this holy cloak, from the heavens, on which appear heavenly inscriptions. It is said that Hadhrat Baba Nanak wore it often. After his demise, it has remained in the custody of the Baba's descendants and has been secured in a treasure chest in Dera Baba Nanak. To seek blessings from it, pilgrims from everywhere have been visiting Dera Baba Nanak for centuries. It is said that whenever the Sikhs face any severe problems, by keeping this holy cloak on their head, they pray and thus their prayers find ready acceptance.

Even today, for the Sikhs in particular and for followers of other religions in general, this holy cloak embodies sentiments of love and devotion. At Dera Baba Nanak Sahib, every year, a fair is organized which is attended by Sikh devotees to seek blessings in their hundreds and thousands. The cloak remains protected in a strong room.

When the Promised Messiah^{a.s}, along with his companions, went to view the holy cloak, at Hudur's request, it was displayed. This was no ordinary event. In his book, 'Sat Bachan' Hudur has made a reference in these words:

“It is a very blessed garment on which,
instead of embroidery, verses of the Holy
Quran are written in gold thread.”

Hudur says further:

“When we expressed our desire to see it, in the beginning they only showed it to us while still wrapped in a cloth. However, a small portion of the corner was visible on which the inscribed words had faded. Another thin cloth covered the back and we were told that this was the cloth that had been woven by Arjun sahib’s spouse with the thread spun with her own hands. The narrator was an old Bedi, a descendent of Baba Nanak Sahib. He was the one who was showing us the cloak. He also told us that whatever was written on it had not been written by a human but by a Divine hand. Then we insisted that we wished to see the inscription written by the Divine hand. We pleaded that we had come from a great distance to view it. Then he lifted the cloth a little. On the cloak was written ‘*Bismil Allah ur Rahman-e-Raheem*’ in a beautiful hand. Then the old man wanted to wrap up the cloth. But on further persistence from nearly twenty of us and some dignitaries of the town who had come to meet us, the old man lifted the cloth a little. On one corner, with a bold pen, in a clear and beautiful hand was written ‘*La Ilaha Illal-allah Muhammad-ur-Rasoolul-allah*’..... Then the old man lifted the cloth slightly and on this occasion, in one corner we could see ‘*Inna Deen Indallah al Islam*’ i.e. ‘the true religion in the sight of Allah is Islam.’ Some further sheets were removed and the following words became visible. ‘*Ashhado an La Ilaha Illallah wa Ashhado anna Muhammadan*

Abdohoo wa Rasool o Hoo'. Then, by chance, the Sheikh Sahib noticed some dust within the cloak. He suggested to the old man that the dust should be removed from the cloak. We offered to clean it. After that, the remaining sheets were also lifted and it was proven beyond doubt that the Quranic verses were written on it, and nothing else. In one place Sura Fatiha and in other places it was written that the Quran was the sacred word of God and those who were impure must not touch it."

(Satt Bachan page 32)

When our party reached Dera Baba Nanak, outside the hallowed room in which the cloak was housed we met Sardar Anup Singh Bedi. He was a direct descendent of Hadrat Guru Baba Nanak Sahib and the Chola Sahib (holy cloak) was in his custody. He received us with great warmth and we told him the purpose of our visit. Quite happily, he showed willingness to let us view the casket. In the beginning, Bedi Sahib appeared most hesitant to allow the cameras indoors, but then he agreed. We removed our shoes and entered the room where there was a kind of platform on one side of the room, which was covered by very expensive sheets. A glass casket had been placed on the platform, which was fully covered by large handkerchiefs. Bedi Sahib and some of his Sikh friends prostrated before the casket. We raised our hands and, with great humility, prayed for Hadhrat Guru Baba Nanak Sahib. After having had prostrated the Sikhs friends also joined us in our supplications. After our silent prayers, we presented a gift to the Bedi Sahib. Then I submitted,

"We have come from the distant land of England to see the blessed cloak with our own

eyes and to seek blessings from it. By merely looking at the casket our thirst will not be quenched nor would our desire be satisfied. We humbly submit that permission may be granted for us to view the cloak after it had been taken out of the casket.”

At first, Bedi Sahib said that it was impossible to take the cloak out of the casket. However, on our repeated submissions his heart melted. In fact, God Almighty moderated his heart. He closed the doors of the room with great respect and deference. With prayers, with the help of his friends, he opened the casket with his own hands and the cloak came in to full view. Mr Bedi bestowed another favor on us and unfolded the cloak. For us it was a moment of great emotion as this was the garment that had touched the body of Hadrat Baba Guru Nanak Sahib for many years and on it were inscribed verses of the Holy Quran. This was enough proof that the Hadrat Baba Sahib was a God-fearing holy person and an ardent-lover of the Holy Quran. We were, therefore, able to examine the cloak at close quarters on which, apart from other verses of the Quran, Sura Fatiha and Sura Ikhlas had been inscribed. Mr Hadi made a note of the verses and Mr Jaswal saved the inscriptions on film with the help of his camera. الحمد لله.

After having viewed the Holy Cloak, I asked Mr Bedi how Hadrat Baba Sahib had got it. He said that it is related that it had descended from Heaven and was given to Hadrat Baba Sahib. He also said that, according to another narrative, a Muslim King had the cloak made and presented it to Hadrat Baba Sahib. He added that Hadrat Baba Sahib wore it all the time and it came into the possession of his successors after he had passed away. He

added that whenever a new Guru Sahib was enthroned he would put the cloak over his head to seek blessings. That is how this sacred Cloak as Amanat (trust) of Hadrat Baba Sahib has been safe with the Sikhs for more than 500 years. He told us that every year, hundreds of thousands visit Dera Baba Nanak to pay homage to the holy clock. On these occasions the Chola Sahib is never opened.

We expressed our gratitude to Allah for having been given an opportunity to view the holy cloak in its uncovered condition.

Because of our visit, Sardar Anoop Singh Bedi and I became very close. When he came to England the following year, I requested Hadrat Khalifa tul Masih to grant him an audience. Most graciously, Hudur agreed to meet him. I was instructed to arrange a feast in honour of the guest. On the appointed day, along with some friends, Mr Bedi came to meet Hudur and I was privileged to be present during the meeting.

After the meeting Mr Bedi said in a voice choked with emotion:

“Mirza Sahib’s face is illuminated and on it signs of contentment and tranquility are apparent. Never before in my life have I seen such signs on anyone’s face.”

In the evening, in the Mahmood Hall a dinner had been arranged in which Hudur also participated. In my address, I welcomed Mr Bedi and in response, he expressed his sentiments of love and respect for Hudur. On this occasion, many other Sikh people had also been invited. A brotherly relationship with Mr Bedi still continues.

I wish to describe further detail about the friendly relations with Sikh brethren. In 1976, along with Hadhrat

Chaudhry Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, I had an opportunity to visit Qadian. A detailed account of this journey has been published in the Weekly 'Badr'. Before commencing our return journey from Qadian I told Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib that I would not be able to accompany him to Lahore as I wished to see the Darbar Sahib at Amritsar. Chaudhry Sahib said:

“We have come together and we will go back together. For a long while I have not been to Darbar Sahib, therefore we shall go together.”

During his stay in Qadian, the Indian Government had posted two Ministers from the Central and one from the State Government as hosts. Two of these Ministers were Sikhs and Chaudhary Sahib mentioned my desire to them. They agreed quite happily to make the necessary arrangements for us to visit Darbar Sahib.

The next day early in the morning, we moved to Amritsar where we were housed in the Guest House. Many dignitaries and officials had assembled there to see Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib. Before 11 a.m., we went to visit the Durbar Sahib. To welcome us some organizers were present at the entrance. They garlanded us. One of the organizers acted as a guide. After having taken off our shoes, we followed the guide into the premises of the Durbar Sahib. For our benefit, the guide related the history of the Darbar Sahib.

We saw the Guest House and the community kitchen at Durbar Sahib. Shri Akaal Takht Sahib was opened particularly for us and there we caught a glimpse of the rarities the Sikhs had collected during their rule.

After having visited the Durbar Sahib, we entered Pakistan through the Wagah border post.

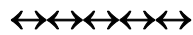
In the earlier years, whenever I went to Amritsar, I also visited the famous Jallian Wala Bagh where during the freedom movement, under orders from the then Governor of the Punjab General O' Dwyer; General Dyer opened fire and massacred many hundreds of Indians. Even now, bullet holes can be seen on the walls. The Indian Government has established a Museum on the spot where the atrocities were perpetrated. In fact, the indiscriminate firing at Jallian Wala Bagh had given an impetus to the freedom movement against the British rule.

We have always enjoyed an extremely cordial relationship with the Sikh community in Britain. For the Fifth Centenary celebrations of Hadrat Baba Guru Nanak Sahib, a convention was held at Ealing Town Hall. On that occasion Edward Heath was invited and some Sikh leaders spoke on the holy life and character of Hadrat Guru Baba Nanak Sahib. On behalf of the Muslims, I was invited to speak. I congratulated the Sikh community on the Centenary Celebrations and in my speech covering the life and character of Hadrat Guru Baba Nanak Sahib, I highlighted the excellent and beautiful aspects of his life. The Sikh audience greatly applauded my speech. At the end of my speech, the Indian High Commissioner particularly congratulated me. On that occasion, the number of audience was more than 500 and the convention was widely reported in the local news papers.

When I began holding Seerat un Nabi (saw) (Life of The Holy Prophet) meetings every year, some Sikh speakers, in the course of their speeches, paid glowing tributes to the Holy Prophet of Islam (saw). These events were always reported in 'Akhbar e Ahmadiyya' and 'The Muslim Herald'.

A MEMOIR

The Sikhs have been endowed with some noteworthy qualities. They are very hospitable. Visitors to their Gurdawaras Sahib are always received with open arms. Once a friendship is established, they always remain faithful. They show respect to the founders of all religions in general.



Chapter – V

My Colleagues in United Kingdom

When I first arrived in London, there was only one missionary in the UK. Mouloud Ahmad Khan was serving as the Imam of the London Mosque. I assisted him as his Deputy until the end of 1960.

Chaudhry Rehmat Khan succeeded him as Imam of the London Mosque. After handing over charge of the Mission Mouloud Ahmad Khan returned to Pakistan. Until 1964, I continued to work as Deputy Imam under Chaudhry Rehmat Khan. Early in that year, Chaudhry Rehmat Khan suffered from a heart disease. After some treatment in London, he was called back. Mr. Abdul Hameed was appointed the secretary of the British Jamat on 22 March 1962. He served here till 2nd May 1963.

Chaudhary Rehamt Khan Sahib went back on April 13th 1964 and I assumed the charge of Imam Masjid and Missionary In-charge. Mr. Nazir Ahmad Hyderabad was appointed the Muballigh in London in April 1966. He worked with me until 13th May 1967. During this period, he also served as the Central Finance Secretary. He left on 7th July 1967. Mr. Laeeq Ahmad Tahir succeeded him as Deputy Imam and worked with me in that capacity until 14th December 1970. In this period he rendered valuable service by speaking at several Colleges and Clubs on the subject of Islam. He also worked as a Joint Editor of 'Akhbar-e-Ahmadiyya'. The Centre in Rabwah appointed him as General Secretary of Majlis Khuddam-ul-Ahmadiyya in the UK. In those days, I served as Naib

Sadar Majlis Khuddam ul Ahmadiyya UK. Mr. Laeeq Ahmad is a great Scholar of Islam and bears excellent demeanor and manners. His relations with the members of the Jamaat was deep and strong. For his cheerful co-operation and obedience, I am duly indebted to him.

Mr. Ata-ul-Mujeeb Rashid, M.A. started assisting me with effect from 2nd September 1970 and continued until 25th September 1973. He is the son of Hadhrat Moulvi Abul Ata Sahib Jalandhri who was my teacher and also my benefactor. He also discharged his duties admirably in the field of Tabligh by delivering speeches. His support in certain other responsibilities of the Mission was exemplary. In his own right, he is also an erudite Scholar of Islam and is endowed with excellent manners. He was exceptionally courteous and humble. He treated me with great love and extended his co-operation unstintingly. May Allah reward his efforts in the very best manner. Amen. Currently, he is both Missionary in Charge in Britain and Imam of the London Mosque.

Major Abdul Hameed Sahib retired from the Army and devoted his life to the service of the Community. On 22nd March 1962, he was sent to Britain. In those days, Mr. Chaudhry Rehmat Khan was the Imam and I was the Deputy Imam. The Major Sahib was appointed Secretary of the UK Mission. In the matter of Tabligh, he was truly passionate. Based on his extensive experience in the Army he reorganized the Mission Office on proper lines. On 13th April 1964, he was sent to Washington as a Missionary for America.

Mr. Abd ul Wahab Adam arrived in England on 16th October 1972 and worked with me as Deputy Imam. He was a tireless worker. He exhibited exemplary standards of obedience, passion in respect of assisting me

particularly in 1974 when in Pakistan the Jamaat passed through a turbulent phase, he worked along with me day and night to convey the news from Rabwah to the Missions all over the world. He played an important role in enlivening the Press. He is equally proficient and fluent in English, Arabic and Urdu languages. He rendered valuable assistance to me in the matter of the 'Muslim Herald'. May Allah reward him abundantly. Having been appointed the National Ameer of Ghana he departed from England on 5th December 1974.

Mr. Bashir Ahmad Orchard was sent to the UK from the British Guyana in 1966. He assumed charge of the Glasgow Mission. Previously he was the In-charge of the Scotland Mission. He was the first British Missionary of Islam. He worked with me exhibiting in exemplary standard of co-operation and obedience. He also wrote articles for the 'Muslim Herald' and he started a two page pamphlet styled as 'Scotland Gazette'. He was most God fearing, a true Muslim and a Wali-ul-Allah (saintly person). He had a very simple lifestyle. May Allah grant him a high station in Paradise. Amen.

Mr. Munir ud Deen Shams arrived in England on 2nd July 1973 and worked with me for a long period as Deputy Imam. He has rendered valuable service in the field of education, Tarbiyyat and administration. Currently, he is serving in London as Additional Wakeel ut Tasneef. He is the son of Hadhrat Maulana Jalal ud Deen Sahib Shams, the former Imam of the London Mosque.

Mr. Ameenullah Khan Salik served in the British Mission from 5th July 1974 until 18th May 1977. During most of that period he served in the Yorkshire region and has now settled in America.

A MEMOIR

Mr. Naseem Ahmad Bajwa came to England on 15th October 1975 and worked in various Jamaats in the UK. In fact, he is still serving in the UK. During this period, he co-operated with me and obeyed me in every matter. May Allah reward him abundantly. Amen.

Mr. Anees ur Rahman Bengali came to England on 4th June 1977. For a period of three or four years he was in charge of the Huddersfield Mission. He was a pious and a courteous person and had a pleasing personality. Alas! He has passed away.

Mr. Mubarak Ahmad Saqi was appointed a Missionary for the United Kingdom on 22nd July 1978. Previously, he had served in Liberia as Missionary in Charge and National Ameer for a long period. He was courteous to the extreme and he had an enviable sense of humor. To me he was most co-operative and deferential. He could write and speak extremely well. Alas! He has passed away. May Allah grant him HIS proximity.

I cannot possibly thank Allah enough for having been gifted with such wonderful colleagues which enabled the British Jamaat to render services as a team. We lived and worked like brothers and never did any differences arise amongst us. May Allah reward all of them in abundance. Amen.

Memories Of The Past ***(Respected Aziz Deen Sahib)***

A famous renowned Urdu poet Zouq has very beautifully put it. Thus:

*“O Zouq! Reuniting with an old crony is
no less beneficial than meeting a Messiah and
Methuselah.”*

Aziz Deen was like my brother, indeed he was my brother. He was most affectionate and he always shared with me my moments of joy and sorrow. He was my confidante and he was my associate. I looked up to him and in a way, he was my sermonizer. His company was like being in a meeting with the righteous.

I recall the occasion of the wedding of his daughter Talat in the Mahmood Hall adjacent to the Fazl Mosque. In the open ground, huge marquees had been set up that got packed with guests. Talat was to marry Mansoor Ahmad, son of Mubarak Ahmad Saqi. Due to this union the Almighty joined two families who were wholly devoted to Ahmadiyyat. Seated in a chair, I was waiting for the arrival of Hadhrat Khalifa tul Masih IV. Involuntarily, I became absorbed in remembrance of my dear and affectionate friend, Abdul Azeez Deen. Had he been alive on that day he would himself have seen off his daughter, the daughter who had him over the moon when she was born. When, over the telephone, he had told me of her birth, his voice was vibrant with emotion. I went across to see Talat and to congratulate her father.

Aziz Sahib said:

“Now that the Almighty has blessed me with two daughters, I hope that I will be able to bring them up and educate them properly as a reward Allah may bless me with His paradise.”

On the birth of all his children, he was always overjoyed but on the birth of Talat, he was ecstatic and joyful.

What should I recall what not? Aziz Deen Sahib was studded with enviable attributes. He was noble, tall, handsome, gifted with masculine charm and grace. He was comeliness personified. Apart from all these qualities, in the matter of integrity and *Taqwa*, (righteousness) he had achieved a very high order.

He was a perfect example of the saying:

“He who repents in his youth follows the pattern of a prophet”.

Aziz Deen was one of those who could have never indulged in casting a wicked eye on others, iniquitous dealings or any other unsavory pursuit. He once told me that during World War II, at the peak of his youth, he had a furniture shop. A young woman once visited the shop, bought some furniture and gave her address to which the furniture was to be delivered. She said that she would pay at the time of delivery. The next day, he said, he went to the given address to deliver the furniture. A young good-looking girl emerged from the house and said that her mother had gone out of the house but that she had left with her the price of the furniture. She asked him to arrange the furniture in the basement, which he did. He sat in a chair waiting to be paid when the young girl appeared with nothing on. As soon as he saw her in this state, in a huff, he rushed upstairs and left without receiving any payment. He breathed a sigh of relief when he got to the road. He

thanked God that by His sheer Grace He had saved him from a horrific trial. He begged His forgiveness throughout that day. All this occurred when he was at the zenith of his youth.

فارسی شعر

This occurrence took place in the days when, young men, on arrival in the West, got deeply involved in merry-making and even risked their future. Aziz Deen was extremely fond of conveying the message of Islam. In fact, he was greatly passionate about it. The singular object of his life seemed to be inviting people towards Allah (*Dawat-ill-Allah*). In 1961, in accordance with the instructions of Hadhrat Khalifa tul Masih II, for weekly speeches delivered by one of us a hall was rented in Brighton for conducting weekly sessions of speeches. According to the plan, under the Chairmanship of Azeez Deen Sahib, I would deliver a speech. In spite of our efforts at promotion, on one occasion no one came to the venue of the meeting at the appointed time. After a while, Aziz Dean Sahib suggested that we should go and sit on a bench outside the hall.

He asked me to read the Newspaper, and he would try to persuade some passers by to enter the hall. When we had a reasonable number of audience, we could hold our meeting. Accordingly, I sat on a bench and started reading the paper. Aziz Deen Sahib kept on inviting passers-by to participate in the meeting but with little success. Finally, he met a deaf and dumb gentleman and brought him along. He sat next to me on the bench. Aziz Deen Sahib said to me:

“If nothing else let us convey Allah’s message to this person.”

Aziz Deen Sahib would write a few words on the blank spaces of the newspaper and the deaf and dumb person would reply in writing. This continued for a while until suddenly he saw a woman walking towards us. He asked me to keep the deaf and dumb man engaged and promised to bring the lady along. In spite of his endeavors, the lady paid no attention to him. Disappointed, he resumed his seat on the bench. The deaf and dumb person appeared to be very intelligent and had a sense of humor. After a while, he wrote on the paper:

“You couldn’t catch her?”

A little later, he wrote:

“I would like to donate £ 5.00 to the admirable work that you are doing.”

Aziz Deen said to me:

“Thank God, the rent for the hall has been recovered in full.”

Once he took me to the Old Bailey where he worked as an interpreter. On that day a Judge, well known for his short temper, was presiding. During the interval, as the Judge was proceeding to his retiring room, suddenly, Aziz Deen rushed towards him. After greeting him, he said:

“If you don’t mind, may I present you a book?”

At this apparent audacity, the Judge was stunned and this reaction was evident from his face. However, the Judge accepted the book ‘The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam’. Aziz Deen Sahib had written his name and address on the inside of the book. After the Judge had entered his retiring room his staff threatened Aziz Deen Sahib and told him that in the Court premises, neither a book nor any other article could be given to a Judge and it was quite possible that the Judge would take some action

against him. However, Aziz Deen Sahib took no notice of the intimidation. A few days later he happily came to the Mission House and showed me a letter that he had received from the Judge in which he had thanked him for the present. Not only had he highly praised the contents of the book but he also invited him to his country home for tea.

Habitually Aziz Sahib kept a few small booklets and pamphlets in his pockets and whenever an opportunity arose, he would present some.

Once he told me that his son Muneer Deen often said to him jokingly:

“You have lived in England for quite a while and you have had the most excellent opportunities and yet you have spent all your life more or less like as a recluse and have never made any attempt to save.”

He told me that he replied to his son in these terms:

“In the shape of earnest supplications I have amassed a treasure for you from which you will benefit throughout your lives. God willing, you will never see a day when you are hard-up.”

Once the subject of Life Insurance was under discussion. Aziz Sahib told me that he had never had the slightest desire to insure his life as he was fully confident that Allah would never let his children go waste and that beyond the imagination of any Insurance Company He would bless them abundantly.

He was deeply in love with the Mosque and that attribute was characteristic of him. His obedience and love for the Imam of a Mosque was also of an outstanding quality. He would often say:

"It's my experience that those who do not regularly bring their children to the Mosque and do not admonish them to strengthen their ties with the Mosque, either gradually sever their connection with it altogether or sometimes their contact with the Mosque becomes very fragile."

Once we made an assessment and discovered with surprise that the children of nearly 70 % of those parents, who are not regular in their visits to the Mosque, gradually distance themselves from it. In the summer or in the winter, whether the weather was pleasant, overcast or snowbound, Aziz Deen Sahib never allowed his contact with the Mosque to be weakened. He maintained a positive and a loving relationship with the Imams of the Mosque. He often said that he who obeyed the Missionary became recipient of unbound blessings.

A particular attribute of his was the extreme love and devotion towards the members of the family of the Promised Messiah. His respect and devotion towards each member of the family was his specific quality. Whenever they were in London, most members of the family stayed with him. Aziz Deen Sahib took pride in serving them. In 1961 when Hadhrat Nawab Amat ul Hafeez Begum Sahiba came to England, he pleaded with her to stay with him and permit him to discharge the responsibility of a host. A daughter of Begum Sahiba was also with her and both stayed with Aziz Deen Sahib for nearly three months. With great pride, he would mention that a daughter of the Promised Messiah^(pbuh) blessed his house with her visit.

Quaid-e-Azam's Visit to The Fazl Mosque – London.

Aziz Deen Sahib had the rare privilege of serving Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah when he visited the Fazl Mosque. Let me give you an account of this in his own words.

“Disgusted with the attitude of the Indian Muslims and in the absence of any practical measures, the Quaid e Azam moved to London. He bought a house in Hampstead and started practice in the Privy Council. He announced that he would have no interest or involvement in Indian politics. Hadhrat Khalifa tul Masih II who kept a watchful eye on the political developments in India, directed the Imam of the London Mosque, Maulana Abd ur Raheem Dard, to persuade the Quaid e Azam, who in those days was merely referred to as ‘Mr Jinnah’, to return to India and once again assume leadership of the Muslims. Huzoor said that he could not see anyone amongst the Muslims who had the necessary ability to lead.

On receipt of these instructions, Maulana Dard Sahib got in touch with Mr Jinnah and invited him to the Mosque for tea. He told him that he had a message for him from the Imam of the Jamaat Ahmadiyya. The Quaid Azam accepted the invitation. On the morning of the Quaid's visit Maulana Dard Sahib instructed me to make the necessary arrangements for tea. Mr Jinnah came at the appointed time. Both Maulana Dard and Mr. Jinnah sat in the drawing room of the house at 63 Melrose Road. Mr. Deen went to fetch tea and after placing it on the table was about to leave when Maulana Dard Sahib invited me to

join them. Maulana Dard Sahib conveyed the message from the Khalifatul Massih II to him. He began his efforts to persuade him to return to India but the Quaid remained adamant and insisted that he would not return. Four or five similar sittings ensued. On each occasion Maulana Dard Sahib invited me to join in the discussion.”

Aziz Deen Sahib was indeed a walking history of the London Mission. He had established cordial relationships with Colonel Douglas who delivered the judgment in the murder case against the Promised Messiah. The Colonel related the whole story to him several times like this:

“When Hadrat Mirza Sahib came to my Court and I looked at him I was convinced beyond doubt, that he was totally innocent. On the other hand, there was strong evidence against him. Christians, Muslims and Hindus all were determined to prove that Hadrat Mirza Sahib was guilty. The case dragged on for a few days and my confusion continued to intensify. Finally, on the day the judgment was to be delivered I was pacing up and down on the veranda of my house. I began to ponder over the proceedings. Suddenly in a vision, I saw Hadrat Mirza Sahib standing in front of me and he said:

“I am innocent.”

When I looked at his clean and pure face something within me directed me to have a good look and see if such a face could be that of a person guilty of murder. Something within me declared that he was certainly not a murderer. I went indoors and called the Superintendent of Police. I told him that this person could not possibly be guilty. The Superintendent said that the pivotal point of the case was the evidence of Abdul Hameed. The whole case was dependent on Abdul Hameed’s statement that

Hadrat Mirza Sahib had sent him to kill Dr. Martin Clarke. However, as Abdul Hameed lives amongst the Christian Clergy, if he was separated from them and kept in the police custody he might tell the truth. The next day I ordered that Abdul Hameed should be taken into police custody. Thereafter Abdul Hameed broke down and cried out that Hadrat Mirza Sahib had not spoken a single word to him and that the case was registered on the basis of what Reverend Martin Clarke had instructed him.”

Aziz Deen relates that once, Colonel Douglas had said to him:

“I am surprised that in such a short space of time the Mirza Sahib’s Movement has made such a rapid progress.”

One can narrate a lot about Aziz Deen Sahib but I end this account here for fear of making it too lengthy. I request friends to pray that the Almighty may raise the status of my dear brother in Heaven. May He shower His blessings upon his wife, his children, his grandchildren, brother Manandeen and his children and enable them to become devoted Ahmadies and bless them with spiritual and material prosperity. Amen.

A Meeting with Prince Charles The Prince of Wales

On 13th December 1996, the Almighty afforded me an opportunity to meet the Prince of Wales along with some Muslim and non-Muslim dignitaries and scholars. The Foreign Office of the British Government arranged a seminar named

'A Sense of the Sacred- Building Bridges between Islam and the West'.

The Prince of Wales was invited to participate and speak, an invitation that he kindly accepted. There were about 30 participants in the seminar. Amongst them were Ambassadors of some Muslim countries, senior officials in the Foreign Office and some intellectuals. Participants sat around a very large Round Table.

As I had also been invited to attend the conference, on 13th December I reached Wilton Park Station by train, where along with other participants I was received. We were all given distinctive badges to wear. At 10 o'clock, a Helicopter carrying the Prince of Wales landed in the Park. All participants stood in a row. The Prince shook hands with every one. Each participant introduced himself. The participants stood around the Prince for a short while when some Islamic subjects came under discussion. The Prince said he was happy that the Islamic teachings were now beginning to be better understood and that the old prejudices were subsiding. In an informal manner, all participants sat around the Round Table. Alongside the Acting High Commissioner of Pakistan, I sat opposite the Prince. On the other side sat the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia.

The proceedings of the meeting commenced with a speech delivered by the Prince. Only those participants who had already been nominated were allowed to take part in the discussions.

Then Bishop Michael Nazir Ali of Rochester, who is of Pakistan descent, presented his paper on 'Tolerance Amongst Religions'. In his speech, the Bishop quoted English version of some verses by the poet Iqbal. In them, there was a prominent mention of the relationship between God and man. Here is the English translation of the verses:

“You made the night, and I the lamp.
You the clay, and I the cup.
You desert, mountain-peak and vale,
I flower bed, Park and Orchard.”

In his speech, the Bishop laid great emphasis on the fact that both Islam and Christianity believe in the same God and both lay great stress on the need for mutual respect. Therefore, he said, there was no reason why the followers of the two faiths should not live together with mutual love and respect. In his support, he quoted several examples from the Islamic and Christian history. Some other speeches were also delivered.

The meeting continued until midday and after that, participants were given an opportunity to intermingle with each other. Apart from discussing various matters with other participants, I had a lengthy conversation with Bishop Michael Nazir Ali. For the atrocities being perpetrated on their members in Pakistan, he sympathized with the Ahmadiyya Jamaat. He stressed the need for followers of all major religions to use their best endeavors to create an atmosphere of tolerance so that no one should be persecuted merely because of his dissimilar beliefs.

At 1 o'clock, at the dining table, all participants sat around the Prince. Arrangements had been made for a group photograph with the Prince. Since I also appeared in the photograph, I was sent a copy. I was extremely surprised to see that amongst the participants, I was the only one wearing a cap – all others were bare headed.

After the photograph had been taken the Prince once again shook hands with everyone and left in a motorcar. I regarded this occasion as a blessed one as I was enabled to convey the message of Islam to the participants and also sent them Islamic literature after words.

My Participation in the Banquet Given by The British Prime Minister

Mr. John Major, the British Prime Minister arranged the reception on 11th March 1997 in the banquet house London. The foreign office of Britain also invited me to this occasion. The prime Minister in his address threw ample light on the cordial relations between the UK and Pakistan. This banquet was largely attended by a number of ambassadors, ministers and the officials of British Government. I was given a seat just opposite to the Prime Minister. Along with me some ministers were sitting with whom I held interesting and fruitful discussions on Islamic subjects.

Meetings with Orientalists and Intellectuals.

Meeting with Kenneth Craig

Noted orientalist Mr. Kenneth Craig was a professor in the Sussex University. He was also a well known clergy man of the church of England. He wrote over a dozen books on Islam which received wide appreciation and have also been translated into other languages. Mr. Craig was well versed in Arabic. He traveled extensively in the Arab countries and at one time he had also served as pastor of a church in Jerusalem. One of his books “Call of the Minarat” became widely popular and has been translated into many other languages. Another book “The Event of The Holy Quran” also received ready acceptance with the readers.

After studying two or three books authored by him I felt that Mr. Craig has great respect for Islam and its founder Holy Prophet Hadrat Mohammad^{s.a.w}. His heart was absolutely free from any kind of hatred or bigotry against Islam. This made me eager to meet him so I wrote a letter to him expressing my desires. He replied that he was expected in London in a few days and asked me to arrange the venue and time of meeting. I invited him to lunch which he accepted.

During the course of the meeting, Mr. Craig made a mention of the Holy Prophet Hadrat Mohammad^{s.a.w} with deep love and devotion and he admitted that he was the greatest man in the world. He also said that he had read the Holy Quran a number of times and had found it to be a treasure trove of knowledge and wisdom. Mr. Craig told me that he had also studied Jamat Ahmadiyya. I presented

some books of the Jamat which included “The Philosophy of The Teachings of Islam”. This meeting was very cordial and we promised to meet once again in future. Mr. Craig invited me to Brighton where he was residing. After some days when I visited Hadrat Chaudhary Mohammad Zafarullah Khan Sahib I noticed a book in his hand. Hadrat Chaudhary Sahib’s eyes were filled with tears after reading the book. On being asked he told me that this was the book “Event of the Holy Quran” written by Mr. Craig and he was all praise for the writer as he had paid a glowing tribute to the Holy Quran and presented the holy prophet Hadrat Mohammad ^{saw} in a very respectful manner. Hadrat Chaudhary Sahib said that after reading the book he could not contain his tears. Then he said,

“The miracle of the lofty and exalted character of the Holy Prophet is that it endears friends and strangers alike.”

Hadrat Chaudhary asked me to arrange a meeting with Mr. Craig. I said that I had already met him and knew him very well. I rang up Mr. Craig in Briton and giving him an invitation for dinner I said that Hadrat Chaudhary Sahib wanted to meet him. Mr. Craig replied that he would soon inform me when he would be able to come.

On the appointed day Mr. Craig arrived in London. I received him at the station and both of us reached Royal Common Society where the dinner had been arranged. During the dinner a lively and delightful discussion ensued. Hadrat Chaudhary Sahib asked him, “Despite being a Christian what is the reason behind your paying a glorious tribute to the Holy Prophet?”

Mr. Craig answered,

“I believe the Holy Prophet to be a truthful,
pious and a great reformer who brought great

revolution in the world and enabled millions of people to cultivate excellent character and manners. The age of the Holy Prophet was an age of darkness which he transformed into an era enlightenment and wisdom through his excellent teachings and perfect example. Although in some matters I differ with his ideas especially when he describes Jesus Christ as a human being whereas I am convinced of his divinity, yet I know very well that he has perched Jesus Christ from the indecent allegations of the Jews.

Hadrat Chaudhary Sahib and I were very delighted to hear the views of Mr. Craig. Our meetings and correspondence with Mr. Craig continued over the years. He always showered great affection on me and whenever he was to visit London, he would inform me without fail.

Meeting With Mr. Montgomery Watt

Even when I was a student, I had heard the name of Mr Montgomery Watt and I had been impressed by the fact that he had written a number of books on Islam. Although I did not get an opportunity to read his books when I was at college, on arrival in England, however, I had the urge to read his books, particularly ‘Muhammad at Mecca’ and ‘Muhammad at Medina’. I was also keen to meet him. He was then Professor of Islamic Studies at the Edinburgh University. I wrote to him and expressed a desire to meet him. I was surprised to receive his reply telling me that he would soon be visiting London. He also told me when he would be free for a meeting. A few days later, I invited him for lunch at a restaurant. That was our first meeting. I asked him how he had become interested in Islam. He said that when in 1937 his mother died

suddenly, as a mere student, inevitably he had to face some financial problems. It therefore became necessary for him to advertise and look for a paying guest. A student of Veterinary Medicine moved in with him. The young guest was an Ahmadi and they often exchanged views over breakfast. The young student displayed a great sense of honor for Islam and it was he who introduced him to Islam. Then he became interested in a detailed study of religions. After an in depth study, to gain further knowledge of Islam, he visited some Arab countries and thus he was able to write books on Islamic topics.

Only then, he said, he felt that he was competent to write books on Islamic subjects. This meeting was not only very interesting but also very informative. I presented him with some Ahmadi publications, some of which, he said, he had already read.

A little later, the Ahmadiyya UK Mission organized a meeting on '*Seerat un Nabi*'. I invited Mr Montgomery Watt to participate and speak on the life of the Holy Prophet (saw). Accepting the invitation he visited London and stayed in a nearby Hotel. However, I insisted that, on the two days of the proceedings, he should have both meals with me at my residence. By then Hadhrat Chaudhry Zafrulla Khan had moved into the upper floor flat in the Mission House. He joined us for both meals and for me those lunches and dinners became treasures of knowledge and devotion. Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib would talk about a variety of incidents in his own life, such as meetings with the Promised Messiah (pbuh) and his successors. He also touched upon some political subjects. I would often invite other guests to join us for meals and they too profited from his company. This practice

continued for many years and I benefited immensely from this spring of benevolence.

Once when Mr. Professor Montgomery Watt was invited for lunch at my residence, he met Chaudhry Sahib and this was a most fascinating encounter. Two world famous dignitaries sat at the same table and talked about Islam. Chaudhry Sahib said to Mr Montgomery Watt:

“I was deeply disappointed on reading your book ‘Muhammad at Mecca’. In it you had leveled erroneous and unsavory allegations against the Holy Prophet of Islam (saw). After reading this book, I had made up my mind never to read another book written by you. However, a little later, a friend presented to me your book ‘Muhammad at Medina’. I told my friend that I was determined never to read another book written by Mr Watt, as in his first book, mention of the Holy Prophet of Islam (saw), was not really based on truth. I felt that you had written that book wearing prejudicial glasses. My friend told me that in the new book you would find that the attitude of the author had altered radically. He urged me to read it. When I read it I was greatly surprised and pleased as I found that your attitude had undergone a complete transformation. In the new book you have presented the various events in the correct light.”

Mr Watt replied:

“Sir, you have correctly assessed the situation. When I wrote my first book ‘Muhammad at Mecca’ my knowledge of Islam was strictly limited. After further studies I

became familiar with the exalted and lofty station of the Holy Prophet of Islam (saw). By writing my second book 'Muhammad at Medina', I have made a sincere attempt to compensate for the earlier errors. I have now attempted to present the various events in the correct light."

My correspondence with Mr. Watt continued. Although he was an author of more than thirty books, I was greatly impressed by his humility. He had already written many books on Islam that had gained great fame and acceptance. He had established friendly relationships with a number of Heads of State, Kings and high officials in the Arab World. Even in the remotest corner of his mind, I found no trace of pride or arrogance. He always met me with warmth and listened attentively to whatever I had to say. Even obliquely, he never hinted that he was a renowned scholar. He displayed the same attitude when he met Chaudhry Sahib. He sat with him respectfully as if Chaudhry Sahib was his tutor.

In his speech at the Seerat ul Nabi Mr. Watt paid a glowing tribute to the Holy Prophet Hadrat Mohammad^{pbuh} and admitted that the Holy Prophet was the greatest man ever borne in the world. He said that the Holy Quran is a great guide for mankind which he recited daily.

The orientalists, in general, have depicted Islam in an erroneous way and leveled baseless allegations on Islam under the garb of Western knowledge; but the person I have mentioned here is free from any kind of bigotry for Islam or its holy founder.

My Publications

When I arrived in England in 1959, I felt an urgent need that we should pay particular attention to the education and training of the young and the new converts. At that time English literature, covering the subject of tarbiyyat (training) was almost non-existent. For familiarizing the young and the new converts there was paramount need for a book covering 'Islamic Salaat (Prayer) so that they may offer their *Salaat* in the exact prescribed manner'. In spite of thorough search, I was not able to find a book or a book in English covering this particular subject. There was an urgent need for a book, which would explain the fundamentals of the Faith and the correct manner of offering *Salaat*. Reposing my trust in the Almighty I started the preparation of a booklet called 'The Muslim Prayer Book'. With a great deal of effort, this book consisting of 63 pages was published in 1962. It gained immediate acceptance and since then six editions have been published. It has been translated and published in four different languages.

The publication Department of the Government of Ghana printed 20,000 copies and the booklet got integrated into their School curriculum. Another 7,000 copies were printed in Qadian. A Yugoslavian Professor wrote a comprehensive review of the book. The book was also published in Nigeria. In an International Shoora, Hadhrat Khalifa tul Masih IV, referred to this book.

In those days, whenever I had occasions to speak on Islamic subjects in various Clubs and Societies, most questions asked were related to the status and rights of women in Islam. There was a great deal of

misunderstanding and misinformation on this subject. I wrote a book 'The Status of Woman in Islam'. It also gained immediate popularity and since then three editions have been published.

At the suggestion of Hadhrat Chaudhry Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, I wrote a booklet in English covering the events that led to the martyrdom of Hadhrat Sahibzada Abdul Lateef Sahib.

To enable our young to expose and rebut the groundless allegations made by non-Ahmadi clerics against the Jamaat, it was keenly felt that there was a need for a book. I wrote 'Truth About Ahmadiyyat'. Hadhrat Chaudhary Zafrulla Khan Sahib suggested this name and he very kindly improved its text. The book contained responses to about a dozen different allegations and consisted of about 100 pages. Some very favorable reviews appeared in many places and it became popular within and without the Jamaat.

I also wrote a book in English covering the life and character of Hadhrat Khalifa tul Masih III entitled 'A Glimpse into the Life of Hadhrat Khalifa-Tul-Masih III.' This book also received wide acceptance by the grace of Allah.

I wrote a book 'Islam My Religion' in English for the upbringing and tarbiyyat (training) of the Ahmadi children. This book also gained immense popularity by the grace of Allah. Four editions have been published since and it has been translated into many other languages.

During the troublesome and torturous events of 1974 the Ahmadiyya Jamaat in England, through newspapers and other media, embarked on a campaign to counter the attacks of opponents. We actively responded to the attacks of the opponents and presented facts before the

world. Apart from the prestigious newspapers and magazines in Britain dozens of papers and magazines published our articles all over the world. I collected all the relevant clippings and after having arranged them country wise, published in the form of a book 'From the World Press'. This book, consisting of 200 pages became very popular. Ahmadi immigrants seeking asylum both in England and in Germany presented extracts from this book in various courts in support of their cases.

In 1985, when I lived in Rabwah, on strong insistence of some friends, I wrote a book in Urdu entitled 'Muhammad Zafrulla Khan – Chand Yaadeyn' covering my association and interaction with Hadhrat Chaudhry Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan Sahib over the years. The book was still under print when the Secretary of the Majlis Khatem e Nabuwat alleging that I had contravened the provisions of the notorious Anti Ahmadiyya Ordinance of 1984 filed a case against me. While the book was under print an F.I.R., (First Information Report) was registered. The police raided the Printing press, took custody of the book, arrested four non-Ahmadi employees of the Press and put them into jail. At that time I was touring various Jamaats in the Frontier Province. I came to know of these proceedings. Then I went to England where Hudur appointed me as Additional Wakeel ut Tasneef and Chairman of the 'Review of Religions' magazine.

On arrival in England, I published this book, which gained great popularity. Many Ahmadis told me that this book is used for imparting lessons to their children. It is my great desire that this book should be translated into English. May Allah create such conditions that this wish may be fulfilled. Amen.

In 1986, I wrote a book containing a detailed account of the events that led to the martyrdom of Hadhrat Moulvi Abd ur Rahman and Hadhrat Sahibzada Abd u Lateef. It was named 'Shaheedaan e Rah e Wafa'. This book consisted of over 150 pages. The Jamaat in England published it and it gained ready acceptance.

When 'Shaheedan e Rah e Wafa' was published very many friends demanded that for the benefit of the young Ahmadis, the recent converts and the public at large it should be translated into English.

I asked Brother Anwar Ahmad Kahlon Sahib to translate it for me. With great pleasure, he readily accepted this assignment. He said that this undertaking would be a source of blessings for him. With a great deal of effort, he translated the book, which was published under the title 'The Afghan Martyrs'. This book also gained recognition and within a few weeks, the first edition was sold out.

I sincerely request all my dear ones, my children and all my friends who happen to read my autobiography to offer earnest prayers in favor of my brother and my elder Chaudhry Anwar Ahmad Kahlon Sahib. May Allah accept his sincere efforts which he made to gain His pleasure. May His doors also remain open for his progeny as well. Amen.

In 1995, I wrote 'Dars e Ibrat', a book in Urdu. In this book, a detailed mention has been made of the disastrous ends of some of the prominent opponents of the Jamaat. A great deal of effort went into the preparation of this 200-page book. Thousands of copies of this book have been sold and it has gained great fame.

On two different occasions, I have been blessed with opportunities to perform Umra. I have written a 200-page account named, 'Safar Naama Deyar e Habeeb',

which awaits publication. The first three chapters of this book have already been serially published in the weekly 'Lahore'. Readers have sent me some flattering reviews.

In 1996, I started writing a book covering fourteen different facets of the life and character of the Promised Messiah. Putting in hard work my Brother Anwar Ahmad Kahlon Sahib has translated it. In my view, this book is a significant work pertaining to the life and character of the Promised Messiah^{a.s}. The work on this book is still under way and Brother Anwar Ahmad Kahlon Sahib has already sent me 100 typed pages translated by him. This book will, I hope, Inshallah, be presented in the form of an attractive educational bouquet. It will serve as a beacon for the English speaking generations as it covers many attractive and faith-inspiring aspects of the life of Promised Messiah^{a.s}.

Some Experiences in the Field of Tabligh

By the grace of Allah, I have been able to serve in the field of *Tabligh* for a long time. During this period, I learnt many lessons which I want to share with the readers. I hope that young people who wish to embark on the journey of *Tabligh* will benefit from my experiences and perhaps they will get motivated to remember me in their prayers.

O My dear brethren, who have devoted their lives! You have dedicated your lives in the cause of Allah to seek his pleasure and grace. At this stage of life when young people like you have great ambitions for achieving worldly honors, positions and wealth and there are also wide prospects before them, you have forsaken these worldly pleasures and have turned a blind eye to the material prosperity showing obedience to the call given by

the Promised Messiah^{a.s} and dedicated your lives for upholding the word of God. This is a great aim in order to attain highly spiritual prosperity and destiny does not bestow this blessing upon everybody to renounce the love, affection and pleasure of the world is not an easy task. It requires great courage and determination. One has to sacrifice one's all desires and his own self. A true *Waqfe Zindagi* is one who never retraces his steps once he enters this arena, however severe hardships and heavy odds he may have to confront. Even in such hostile circumstances, trials and tribulations, he endeavors to adhere to his pledge of *Waqf* and displays exemplary determination without ever faltering in the way. As a poet says:

*When I set foot in the arena of love I didn't
look back despite the world called out to me
repeatedly.*

Dua (prayer) is a powerful instrument for a *Muballigh* in the field of *Tabligh*. Prayer unlocks the locked doors as well as the fortified hearts. Remember our duty is to propagate the faith and offer prayer. To open up hearts is the work of Allah. A *Muballigh* who thinks he can convince the people who are under his preaching, by dint of his knowledge, oratory skills, his writings and popularity is in manifest error. If all these things are not reinforced by the power of prayers, success would be a distant dream. Here I recall a faith-inspiring incident which I want to share with you. In England, there was a pious and saintly person called Mr. Basheer Ahmad Orchard. He was posted in Glasgow. Once in my capacity as the missionary in-charge, I wrote to him to let me know why there was no news of any converts in Glasgow. A few days later, Mr. Orchard replied that by the end of December he would inform me of three new baits. I was

surprised to know how he could foretell that by a certain date three persons would embrace Islam. That was the end of the matter and forgot about it. After a few days, he sent me two bait forms of Scottish Christians. There was still a month and a half left for the ending of the year. By the middle of December, he sent another bait form of a Scottish person with a note that he had fulfilled his promise. Some days later, when I happened to meet him I asked him how he could tell with conviction that by the end of December three persons would embrace Islam. Mr. Orchard replied,

“When I received your letter, I felt very anxious. I daily used to go out for *Tabligh*, distributed pamphlets, delivered speeches but with little success in the shape of Baits. On receipt of your letter, I decided that I should knock at the door of the Almighty as mere my hard work was not producing the desired results. So, I offered special supplications and fervent prayers and beg my Lord to grant me some people through His grace who would embrace His revealed religion and invoke blessings on The Holy Prophet^{s.a.w}.

I continued to offer these prayers for some days and till one night I saw and elderly man in my dreams. He told me that Allah had accepted my prayers and He would grant me three converts. So, the following day, I wrote that letter to you as I had full faith in the truth of my dream.

After that, these persons came to me at intervals and asked me about Islam. They

told me while passing by the road they noticed the sign board of the mission house and they got inquisitive to know about us. I gave an introduction of the Islamic teachings to them and without any further arguments they signed the Bait Form and became Muslim by reciting the *Kalima*.”

Mr. Orchard further said,

“This was entirely the fruit of prayers and not a result of my personal endeavors. Allah Himself brought them to my door and opened up their hearts for Islam.”

It should always be remembered that without prayers and supplications success can not be achieved in the field of *Tabligh*. I had heard a similar incident from Mufti Muhammad Sadiq Sahib. He told me, “One day, when I was doing some work in the London Mission House an English man came to me. I welcome him, served him tea and snacks and preached him a lot. He was listening to me with rapt attention. At last he stood up, thanked me and went away. The manner in which he left me made me very tense and worried. I lay in prostrations, and prayed, ‘O My Lord! Help me only you can unlock the hearts of the people for Islam. All my speeches and arguments are proving futile. Without your help I can’t achieve any success. I cried bitterly.’ I was still engaged in my prayers and supplication when the door bell rang. I opened the door only to find another English man outside the house. I invited him to come in. He asked me about Islam. I gave him a brief introduction of Islam and I thought he would also leave me like the previous one after asking some questions. But to my great surprise, he became tearful when he heard my answer to his very first

question. He said, 'Please accept me in the fold of Islam and make me a Muslim verily, your faith is from God.' Hadrat Mufti Sahib told me that he was very exulted at this change of heart of the English man and he learnt a lesson that only God can open up the hearts of the people. Our duty is to make efforts and to pray. Prayer has enormous powers.

**Only Those Preachers Who Resort To The
Weapon Of Prayers In The Field of *Tabligh*
Are Bestowed Success Upon.**

It is essential for a *Muballigh* not only to pray for his colleagues but also to acquire first hand knowledge of the country where he has to preach. He must be aware of the history, rituals, periodicals and newspapers and religious and political movements. The wavelength of the preacher should tally with that of the preached ones.

Once, some *Mubalighin* of the UK were sharing meals in the company of Hadrat Chaudhary Mohammad Zafarullah Khan Sahib. I was also present there. Hadrat Chaudhary Sahib put some questions to us about the important incidents of the history of England. We all replied that we had not made any deep study of the history of the UK. Then he asked us about the leading newspapers of the UK and which of them we use to read daily. Our reply was the same. Similarly Hadrat Chaudhary Sahib asked us a lot of questions about the way of life of the English people.

At the end Hadrat Chaudhary Sahib said to us, "You neither speak the language of the British nor are you conversant with their traditions and rituals. You have also not studied the history of

England. How can then you hope that these people would listen to you and accept what you preach them?”

He said further,

“The English have ruled over the world. Whenever an officer was sent to a country, he was strictly instructed to learn the language of that particular country, and to get acquainted with their rituals and traditions. That is why the English people have done a great research on languages. The British officers who were posted in different countries later published their research of the countries in which they had served. Their work is still a beacon of guidance for the people.”

A *Mubaligh* should cultivate, self-respect and humility. By self respect I mean that he should never accept anything from any member of the Jamat. He should be above all such things. Allah will himself cater to his needs. There is a great blessing in thrift. If a *Mubaligh* allows himself to come under the obligation of some of the members of the Jamat, his voice will lose effect and he cannot get his work done. Here, I recall an incident which I want to share with the readers. In Indonesia, there was an Ahmadi *Mubaligh* called Hadrat Syed Shah Mohammad Sahib who had a wide experience in the field of *Tabligh*. Once while imparting valuable advice to me he said, “Never look for help from anybody except Allah. It does not behove a *Mubaligh* to ask for favors from anyone.” Then he related one of his experiences to me. He said,

“I had served in Indonesia for 18 consecutive years and by the grace of Allah I had never held out my hand for help before any body. I resorted to prayers for all my needs which were

always catered to by Allah. When I received orders to return I was beside myself with joy.

I left for Pakistan by sea. I had nothing with me except an old achkan and a pair of clothes. During the journey, it occurred to me that I was returning to my home country after a long period yet I hadn't even a single new dress which I could put on while getting down the train at the Rabwah Railway Station. I was lost in these thoughts and was praying, when suddenly it came to my mind that I should not entertain such desires because this was against the spirit of Waqf (dedication). Therefore I repented and begged forgiveness from Allah.

After a few days, our vessel called at the Singapore Port. I was standing on the deck when I saw a man coming on to the ship carrying a bundle. He enquired about me from the captain of the vessel. The captain brought him to me. He embraced me and said that he was an Ahmadi tailor. He further said, "When I read in the Alfazl that you were leaving for Pakistan by this vessel and also got information that this vessel would call at Singapore port, I felt a great desire to present some thing to you. I had seen your photographs and guessing your description from the photographs I made a pair of dresses, achkan and a Pugree (turban) for you. I am a tailor and I can only present you these things. Please accept them."

Hadrat Shah Sahib said,

"My eyes were full of tears to know that how Allah inspired an Ahmadi, who didn't know me nor did I know him, to fulfill my desire."

Hadrat Shah Sahib said if a Mubaligh bows his head at the door of Allah and never holds out his hand before any body, Allah fulfills his needs from unimaginable sources.

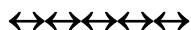
Humility is a great quality and is an ornament to the character of a Mubaligh. A Mubaligh is a servant of the people. Therefore, he should derive pleasure from serving others. He should not have others to serve him. Our Jamat, by the grace of Allah, does its best to fulfill the needs of Mubalighin and also ensures their respects and honor among the people. But it should be remembered that the real honor, respect and service is that which one gets without asking. A Mubaligh works only to gain the pleasure of Allah and hence, he is a well-wisher of everyone. Therein lies the secret of his success. He does not resort to bias for personal gains. He doesn't associate himself with any particular section of the society who tries to play second fiddle to him. He is above all such things and he treats the members of his Jamat like a father treats his children without discrimination. A Mubaligh has also to take some important decisions. If he makes it his principle that he would give his decisions impartially and would never be influenced by any party to gain the pleasure of Allah, then Allah will surely bless his decisions.

It is very essential and also useful for a Mubaligh to recite the Holy Quran and to ponder over its meanings or commentary because it is the real treasure of education and Tarbiyat. If a Mubaligh is guided by the Holy Quran, in his decisions and if his decisions are based on the injunctions of the Holy Quran he will achieve success in the field of Tabligh without fail.

It is also very essential to make a deep study of the hadis to understand the meanings of the Holy Quran. The study of the writings and sayings of the Promised Messiah a.s give an in-depth insight into the Holy Quran and hadis in this age. The Promised Messiah ^{a.s} is the *Hakam and*

Adal. A Mubaligh should make a study of Rohani Khazain continuously.

A Mubaligh is 'in-fact' the mouth organ of the Khalifa of the time. His duty is to convey the directions, opinions and sayings of the Khalifa to the Jamat. Therefore a Mubaligh should himself hold fast to the institution of Khilafat and he should not convey the directives of the Khalifa to the members of the Jamat but also ensure that those directives are being put into practice by the members of the Jamat. All our progress and development, whether spiritual or temporal, is associated with Khilafat. Khilafat is a blessing of Allah. Therefore, our spiritual life depends on it.



Chapter – VI

My Marriage and Children

In 1956, when I was a student of Jamia tul Mobbashireen, my father wrote to me saying that soon he wished to discharge his responsibility concerning my marriage. He mentioned a few names and asked for my comments. In response, I said that I would happily accept his choice. Therefore, he could settle my marriage with whomsoever he wished. A little later, he told me that he had a strong preference for Salima Nahid, a daughter of Abd ur Rahman Khan of Ismaeela. Abd ur Rahman Khan was married to my mother's sister. His father Khan Ameer Ullah Khan was a Companion of the Promised Messiah. Salima was therefore my first cousin. I had seen her on some occasions. I wrote back to my father at once telling him that I agreed with his choice. My father in law Abd ur Rahman Khan, a graduate, was a Civil Servant in the Government of the Frontier Province.

Abd ur Rahman Khan's father, Hadhrat Khan Ameer Ullah Khan owned a lot of agricultural property and was acknowledged as one amongst the Chiefs of the region. He was well known and famous. He was blessed with an opportunity to accept Ahmadiyyat in 1905. At the end of that year, during the Annual Convention in Qadian, he was fortunate enough to pledge his allegiance at the blessed hand of the Promised Messiah. Therefore, by His Mercy and Grace, he was one of the Companions of the Promised Messiah. He loved me dearly. In 1959 when I left for England, in spite of his age and extreme weakness, he came to Rabwah to see me off.

I was married to Salima Nahid on 10th December 1956. The Bridal Party started from our village, Mohib Banda and went to Peshawar. With me, my bride came to my village.

Now, in the month of March 2009, I have been married for fifty-three years. During this entire period, Salima Nahid has taken good care of me in an exemplary manner. Throughout this period, she has not only co-operated with me fully but has always obeyed my wishes. I do not have the words to express my sentiments but from the bottom of my heart I can state that for whatever little success I have achieved in my Waqf and the manner in which I have struggled in the cause, the major part of the credit goes to Salima Begum. Being a Missionary, in various pursuits, day and night, I remained bogged down in various affairs and remained very busy. On occasion, I would come home to find that my wife and my children were asleep. However, never ever, did Salima Begum complain. She took care of and entertained guests of the Movement very cheerfully. Hadhrat Khalifa tul Masih III, Hadhrat Begum Sahiba and other members of the family of the Promised Messiah often stayed with us as our house-guests. Salima looked after them and served them with great pleasure.

For many years, Hadhrat Chaudhry Muhammad Zafrulla Khan stayed in the adjoining flat. Salima looked after him and his guests with great enthusiasm respect and delight. Chaudhry Sahib also loved her dearly. He would call her and refer to her as 'Khanum'. Salima took good care to attend to the smallest needs of Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib.

In the matter of preparation of dowries for our daughters on the occasions of their marriages, without

bothering me in the least, Salima managed everything entirely on her own. Her enviable disposition has always made my home a heaven. May Allah reward her abundantly.

I have been blessed with six children. One of them, Jamil Ahmad died when he was only two years old. That was a terrible shock but Salima; following the example of true believers bore the bereavement with great patience. She showed complete contentment at Allah's will.

Munir Ahmad: My elder son Munir Ahmad was born in October 1957. During his Salaat in a clear vision, even before Munir's birth my father had seen him. He congratulated me and told me that he had been shown a good-looking boy. Two or three hours later Munir Ahmad was born. Alhamdulillah.

At once, I wrote to Hadhrat Khalifa tul Masih II seeking his prayers and requesting for a name for the boy. In his letter, Hudur said that he had prayed for the newborn and suggested the name of 'Munir Ahmad'. Hadhrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad sent us some honey of which he had tasted a little himself.

When he had completed his primary education, it was my wish that he be admitted into the Emanuel School where the entrance examination was tough. Munir did appear for the test but since entrance into that school was far from easy, I prayed for an extraordinary success for him. One morning the following Persian verse emerged from my lips.

'The hardest task is easy for Allah.'

To me, it meant that Munir Ahmad would be admitted to the school. The same day, by the Grace of Allah, we received a letter telling us that Munir Ahmad would be admitted to the school. Munir Ahmad has had

very many opportunities to serve Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib who loved him dearly. Once Muneer Ahmad needed a reference, Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib wrote one out in his own hand, and contrary to his normal practice, he wrote down all his titles and awards at the end.

Munir Ahmad married Saadia Begum a daughter of the late Chaudhry Nasir Muhammad Sial and they have been blessed with three children. The boy's name is Faraaz Ahmad Khan and the two daughters are named Zujaja Iffat and Amina Ambar respectively.

Amat ul Jameel: My eldest daughter is called Amat ul Jameel. She was born in London. I was in Southall in connection with the Jamaat's work and there I received a telephone call asking me to return to the Mission House at once. Shortly after my return Amat ul Jameel was born. Amongst Pathans, births of daughters are not viewed favorably where the birth of a son is celebrated with great pomp and show. By the Grace of Allah, breaking this worthless and absurd un-Islamic custom, I celebrated the birth of my daughter and distributed sweets.

Amat ul Jameel is married to Ijaz Ahmad Khan, son of Subedar Abd ul Ghafoor Khan of Topi of the Frontier Province. Subedar Sahib has, by the grace of God, served the Jamaat in various capacities. He had the honour of being a body guard of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II for a number of years. Both Ijaz and Jameela have been blessed with five boys. The eldest, Iftikhar Ahmad Khan has married Rabia a daughter of his father's sister. The second son is named Riaz Ahmad, the third son is named Ghalib Ahmad, the fourth son is named Abbas Ahmad and the youngest is named Ayaz Ahmad. They all live in Detroit U.S.A. Ijaz Ahmad Khan works in the IT industry.

Amat ul Naseer: My second daughter is named Amat ul Naseer whom we call 'Neeno'. She was also born in London. All my three daughters, Jameela, Neeno and Bushra were enabled to serve Chaudhry Muhammad Zafrulla Khan and Hadhrat Khalifa tul Masih III and members of family of the Promised Messiah. Amat ul Naseer is married to Dr. Abdul Waheed Khan. His father, Abd ul Qudus Khan was my mother's brother. He was enabled to render valuable service to the Jamaat and was Ameer of the Frontier Province for a long while. Amat ul Naseer marriage took place in Kharian where my brother Col. Nazeer Ahmad was posted as Commandant at that time. Hadhrat Chaudhry Muhammad Zafrulla Khan and Hadhrat Chaudhry Bashir Ahmad, Anwar Ahmad Kahlon's father, honoured us with their participation. May Allah reward them abundantly.

The Almighty has blessed Dr. Abdul Waheed Khan and Amat ul Naseer with three children. The eldest is a daughter named Madeeha Henna. She is married to Faiz ur Rahman son of Dr. Hameed ur Rahman Khan of Los Angeles. Dr. Hameed ur Rahman's father, Moulvi Khalil ur Rahman, was my teacher in Qadian. Being a Pukhtoon, he was very kind to me and loved me dearly. Faiz ur Rahman is the grandson of Dr. Abdus Salaam.

The son is named Humayun Ahmad Khan. After Humayun there is a daughter named Alia Noor.

Bushra Nahid: My third daughter is named Bushra Nahid. She was also born in London and for a while, she lived with us in Rabwah as well. She has gained a B.A. Honour's Degree from London University and is married to Mirza Zamir Ahmad son of Mirza Bashir Ahmad of Gillingham U.K. Zamir Ahmad gained a MSc.

Degree in Engineering from London University. They now reside in America and have four children – three daughters and a son. The names of daughters are Natasha, Maha and Zainab Almas and the son is named Moosa.

Mahmood Ahmad: My youngest child is Mahmood Ahmad. Hadhrat Mansoor Begum, the spouse of Hadhrat Khalifa tul Masih III while on a tour of England was staying with us. She repeatedly said to us:

“I am praying that Allah will bless you with a son.”

A little later, by His Mercy and Grace, Mahmood Ahmad was born. I informed Hudur by telegram and Hudur telegraphed us congratulating us. Without a request from me, Hudur told us to name the newborn ‘Mahmood Ahmad.’ There was another strange happening, which resulted in enhancing our faith. My dear friend and my elder, Dr. Nazir Ahmad, a son of Sardar Mehr Singh (Hadhrat Abd ur Rahman) who had been granted opportunities to render extraordinary services to the Jamaat in Abyssinia was then residing in London. He was indeed a very pious and a prayerful person. Once I asked him to pray that I may be blessed with a son. A few days later, he told me that he did pray and God willing I would be blessed with a son. However, he insisted that the boy must be named ‘Mahmood Ahmad’. When Mahmood was born, without a request from me, Hudur named him Mahmood Ahmad. Dr. Nazir Ahmad came to visit us and to congratulate us on the birth of a boy. He asked what name had been given to the newborn. I showed him the telegram that I had received from Hudur. There were tears in his eyes. Thus, the name that the Doctor had suggested was also made known to Hudur.

Mahmood is married to Samar, daughter of my first cousin Abdul Aziz Khan Naib Amir of Peshawar. They have two children – a son and a daughter whose names are Yousaf Ahmad and Maryam.

All my children, the children of my daughters and the children of my sons, are all well-mannered, sincere servants of the Jamaat, obedient to Khilafat and take pleasure in serving their parents. These are the sweet fruits springing from the prayers offered by my parents, the Caliphs of Ahmadiyyat and other elders. I believe Allah will surely bless them with spiritual and material prosperity. Ameen.

My Brothers and Sisters

My parents were blessed with five daughters and three sons. A brother and a sister passed away when they were five and six years old respectively. My brother was named Bashir Ahmad and my sister was named Mah e Talaat. Naturally, it was a great shock for my parents as two of their children had passed away within a period of forty days. Talaat was the first to go to meet her Maker and Bashir followed her forty days later.

At the demise of these two, my parents displayed exemplary patience. Contrary to the normal practice in our villages, my parents did not go into mourning. They were reconciled and content at God's Will. In a state of deep grief my father was shown a dream that he would be blessed with more children. He was particularly advised of the birth of two sons. He wrote down this dream on a piece of paper that I have seen with my own eyes. It is a pity that it has been lost.

Amat ul Kareem: My eldest sister was named Amat ul Kareem. She was three years senior to me and has passed away recently. Since her childhood, we had been very fond of each and were very close. She was married to Muhammad Hassan Khan Durrani, son of Muhammad Akram Khan of Charsadha. Muhammad Akram Khan was the first graduate from the Frontier Province. He was a classmate of the famous poet Allama Iqbal. He was indeed a devout and zealous Ahmadi. He always showed great kindness to me. He would always come to see me in the Boarding House whenever he visited Qadian and would bring me some presents. He was a very enthusiastic preacher of Islam. His extreme zeal and enthusiasm for *Tabligh* earned him the sobriquet of 'Paighambar' (messenger) from the non-Ahmadi people. He took up residence in a new village that he had himself established near Charsadha. The surrounding agricultural lands belonged to him. The Almighty blessed him with the order of a 'martyr'. Details of his martyrdom appear in the 'Tareekh e Ahmadiyyat' Volume 14 Page 256 in the following terms:

“ A great tragedy that occurred on 10th January 1950 is the martyrdom of a devout and sincere Ahmadi Mohammad Akram Khan, a chief of Charsadha Distt. Peshawar. In his Friday sermon, Hadrat Khalifatul Messiah 2nd described this sad happening in the following words:

‘He was 76 years old and belonged to a landlord family. He is the same man about whom once his brother said that they had donated one half to the Ahmadies and the other to non Ahmadies. Earlier he was a member of Paighami Jamat and later joined

the main stream of Ahmadiyah. It is said that some Moulvies were behind his martyrdom. It might not be true because the Pathans kill one and other even over trifles. Nevertheless, he was a very devout and enthusiastic Ahmadi Muballigh.

My sister's husband, Muhammad Hassan Khan Durrani, was a very sincere and honest person and had the character of a Sufi.

Amat ul Kareem and Muhammad Hassan Khan were blessed by God with three sons – Muhammad Saeed Khan Durrani, Muhammad Arshad Khan Durrani and Muhammad Daood Khan Durrani. They were also blessed with a daughter, Shahida Begum.

Col. Nazir Ahmad Khan: I have only one brother, Col. Nazir Ahmad Khan who has now permanently settled in Chicago. Naturally, we spent our childhood together and by the Grace of God we always benefit from a great, mutual love. Although he is only three years younger than me he treats me and respects me as if I were his father. In the Army, he rose to the rank of a Colonel.

When I left for England in 1959 my mother became somewhat downcast. In those days, whoever sailed across the Seven Seas was liable never to return. My mother kept on crying whenever she recalled me. Once my father took her along to see Hadhrat Khalifa tul Masih II. My father said to Huzoor that my mother remained downhearted and due to having parted with Bashir Ahmad often cried. Addressing my mother Huzoor said:

“Why do you cry? You should be happy and grateful to God that He has endowed you with two sons

and one of them is a soldier in the spiritual Army and the other is a soldier in the Army of his country.”

After retirement from the Army, Nazir Ahmad remains continuously engaged in serving the Jamaat Ahmadiyya in Chicago. For many years, he served as General Secretary and on some other posts of the Chicago Jamaat. He still holds some offices in the Jamaat. In 1974 the moulvies unleashed a wave of hatred and violence against the Jamat in Pakistan. During this turbulent period properties of the Ahmadies were plundered. They were physically attacked and martyred and many of the innocent were inflicted injuries upon.

At that time Col. Nazeer Ahmad was residing in the Army cantonment. He opened the doors of his house for the innocent Ahmadies living in the surroundings. He left no stone unturned in serving them. These people stayed in his house safely until normalcy and peace prevailed.

He married Shameem Akhtar, a daughter of a martyr, Muhammad Rustam Khan. His father in law was the first to be martyred during the third Khilafat. Opponents of Ahmadiyyat shot and killed him in his own village.

Nazir Ahmad has been blessed with three sons; Tanweer Ahmad Khan, Dr. Nadeem Ahmad Khan and Dr. Faheem Ahmad Khan. He has also been blessed with a daughter, Durr e Sameen Nausheen. All of them are settled in Chicago. Dr Faheem Ahmad is a an experienced and able cardiologist. When ever I visit Chicago he showers great affection on me and administers me treatment of my heart disease. He also gives me very good counsel. May Allah reward him richly. Amen.

Amat ul Hafeez: My second sister, Amat ul Hafeez was married to the late Muhammad Hussain Khan, son of Abd ul Qayyoom Khan. They have been blessed with four sons; Dr. Mubasher Ahmad, Engineer Maqsood Ahmad, Kaleem Ahmad and Mansoor Ahmad. They have also been blessed with a daughter, Rasheda. Muhammad Hussain Khan had a very gentle character. He was a sincere and devout Ahmadi.

Amat ul Hameed: My third sister, Amat ul Hameed was married to Sahibzada Mahmood Ahmad, a grandson of Sahibzada Abd ul Lateef, the Martyr. A few years ago, Sahibzada Mahmood Ahmad passed away. He had a very gentle temperament and was a very sincere and a pious person. He was blessed with two sons; Dr. Manzoor Ahmad and Imran Khan and two daughters; Amat ul Basit and Tahira Begum.

Amat ul Waheed: My fourth sister, Amat ul Waheed is married to Sahibzada Fazil Lateef, a grandson of Sahibzada Abd ul Lateef, the Martyr. They have two daughters, Naomi and Aashi and one son, Khalid Ahmad. I pray that the Almighty God may make all of them earnest Ahmadis with a deep attachment to the institution of Khilafat. Amen.

***The height of my creativity is that
I should begin my writing with Thy name.***

Today I have completed 82 years of my life and now I entered the twilight zone. The activities of the youth have now come to a stand still. In the words of a poet:

*Leave talking about the days of
the youth in your old age as they are
now a foregone dream.*

My life is fast approaching towards its final destination and I know not when it would arrive there.

Ro mein hai.....

The steed of life is galloping towards its goal and the rider has no control over it. Neither the feet of the rider are in the strips nor are the rein of the horse is in the rider's hand. He is a picture of helplessness personified. The same idea has been conveyed by another poet in simpler words:

Lai Hayat Aai.....

How helpless man is! He has control neither over his birth nor death. When he opens his eyes in the world he weeps and protests that he has to be accountable for his deeds in this world till his life and when he dies his bereaved ones weep over his death thinking what treatment he would be meted out in the next world..... Whether he would be amongst the recipients of Allah's pleasure or amongst those who have incurred His wrath. In short man passes through a period of hope and despair throughout his life. When I look back at my past life it comes before me like motion picture and I loose myself in it.

My father had decided the course and goal of my life even before I was born. When he accepted Ahmadiyyat it created ripples in the village. Not to speak of strangers even his own relatives left no stone unturned in opposing him. He was subjected to all sorts of humiliation and torture. Even his father who loved him dearly turned his sworn enemy and made up his mind to kill him. His brothers and sisters not only turned away from him but also sided with his enemies. His friends turned into foes and hatched conspiracy against him under the garb of friendship. In a sense they became wolves in sheep's clothing. My father witnessed such situations as described by a poet in the following lines:

Kha kar jo

All his relatives fell off. He was bigoted and subjected to attempts of murder. He was also implicated in false cases but this strong man of belief showed exemplary steadfastness and never even for a moment deviated from his faith and suffered humiliation and atrocities of his friends and foes with a cheerful continence and he never uttered even a single word of complaint. He always prayed for his enemies following the foot steps of the Promised Messiah a.s.

Galian Sun Ke Dua Do.....

My kind and loving father had provided me the blessings of Ahmadiyyat even before my birth and neither I nor even my progeny can repay his kindness. Today when I recall my parents my heart is moved to tears and prayers emanate from the bottom of my heart for their forgiveness. I was blessed with a mother who was a living embodiment and epitome of the teachings of Islam and Ahmadiyyat. I had never seen her indulging in backbiting or using foul language or offending anybody. She was

kindness and love personified. She took great pains in imparting education and good manners to me. I feel pity that in pursuit of my education I have to remain separated from her for quite long periods and thus could not benefit from her grace completely. I become sad and gloomy on account of this deprivation. The first favor that my father bestowed upon me after I had opened my eyes into this colorful world was that he offered late night prayers without my knowledge that I should dedicate my life for the cause of Allah. I was his eldest son and before my birth a son was born to him who died in early childhood. He could also have wished and prayed that I should earn name and fame in the world and inherit immense wealth. But he laid great emphasis on this prayer that I should become a *Waqfe-Zindagi* (one who dedicates one's life). He was well aware that dedicating one's life involves great challenges and risks and it also means detachment from the world and to subject oneself to suffering trials and tribulations. But my father never faltered in his decision. Every father nurtures this desire that his son should lend him a helping hand in his old age and also bare his burden in his last ride. But my father was ever ready to renounce and sacrifice the pleasure of the worlds in order to attain the pleasure of Allah. The soul aim of his life was nothing but to seek the pleasure of his Lord. He was an angel in the garment of a man. He exalted himself to the height where a person annihilates himself in the cause of Allah. This state is best described in the following terms:

Man to shudam to man shudi

He was a living example of "Hands at work and heart in God". He offered prayers fervently and passionately at awaking during nights. His heart was detached from the world. He had no interest in his

property nor in farming and trade. Despite possessing immense agriculture property, he preferred to live like a hermit.

My father was completely lost in the love of God, the Holy Prophet and the Promised Messiah a.s. When ever he heard the recitation of the Holy Quran, he would get up and sit as a mark of respect. Recitation of the Holy Quran and studying Hadis and the writings of the Promised Messiah was a part of his life. He had memorized dozens of Ahadis in Arabic. He had extensively read the Holy Quran and that was why he frequently corroborated his arguments with the verses of the Holy Quran. Even today that sight is still vivid in my mind when he saw me off at the Faislabad railway station. I was leaving for England. At this time when I am writing this incident the entire picture is moving before my eyes. I see that I along with my wife Salma Naheed and son Munir Ahmad am standing at the railway station waiting for the train. My father is also standing silently beside me. His eldest son is going overseas. Neither the son nor the father know whether both of them will meet again or not. A sea of passions and emotions is raging in their hearts. We stood silently for a while. Then my father embraced me. I can still hear the sound of his sobbing. His heart seem to me like a simmering pot. I could not contain my emotions. My father held me in a long embrace. Then he separated me and in a voice choked with emotions said to me,

“My dear son! You have dedicated your life in the cause of Allah on your own. Of course, my prayers were with you. Now you are about to enter into the field of *Tabligh* in the shape of a soldier. God knows

whether we would be able to meet or not again in this life. Though I am grieved over being separated from you, yet my heart is overwhelmed with the praise of Allah that by His sheer grace and mercy He has enabled my son to dedicate his life.

My dear son! Now, when you have dedicated yourself, there is no question of retracing your steps from that. You have to spend the rest of your life as a *Waqfe Zindagi*. Be careful, you should never falter in your decision, and the glamour of Europe should not overpower you. If I happen to hear that you have broken the pledge of *Waqf*, you should never turn your face to me. I will consider you dead from that very day. Our ways will branch out in different directions. You will be deprived of my prayers and will have no relations with me whatsoever. My second piece of advice to you is that you should always make your wife observe *purda*. If under the influence of Europe you show any leniency in the least, even then my relation will be cut off from you.”

The train arrived on the platform. My father again embraced me, gave me blessings and wiping his tears bade me farewell. I was also in tears. The train started moving slowly. My father kept on looking at me till I was out of his sight.

When my father returned to Rabwah, he found my mother writhing in grief. Unable to suffer separation from me, she also fainted a couple of times and was weeping

continuously. My father tried his best to comfort her but she was inconsolable in her grief.

The next day, my father took her to Hadrat Khalifatul Massih IInd and told Hudur that she was in a state of shock and grief having been separated from her son. Hudur consoled my mother in the following terms:

“You should rather feel happy that one of your sons is a soldier in the cause of Allah and other is a soldier of his country. What else do you want? You have seen the bright future of your sons with your eyes.”

Hudur’s words brought solace to my mother’s grieved heart. I could never forget those days when I was a school student at Pebi which was three miles away from my village. When I would return from school I always found my mother waiting for me at the door. During summers, when I came back drenched in sweat, my mother had got water ready for my bath. While I washed she would lay the table. I was very fond of fried potatoes. She would take great care in preparing this recipe. Eating hot *rotis* with fried potatoes was really a great treat. She would also give me a glass of *lussy* (butter milk). While I ate, she would fan me. If I ate less, she would insist that I should eat more and asked me what I liked most. After having my meals, I would sprawl on my bed and before I woke up my mother would keep water ready for my bath. When I would come out of the bathroom, tea was served to me. Along with tea, there used to be home made biscuits the taste of which is still fresh on my tongue. How I wish that those days come again! Those were the days when we spent our lives without care under the sweet shade of our parents. I feel great pain to tell this fact that when I asked for water during midnight lying on my bed, my mother would instantly get up and bring water for me.

I would fall asleep and after a while again ask for water. My mother would again wake up and bring water for me. I would ask for water many times during night but my mother never uttered even a single word of displeasure. She would not get proper sleep because of me. She could also say that I should myself get up and drink water but her love and affection for me prevented her from saying that. She was a great mother – kind loving, graceful and bearing angel like character. How I wish to get her back again so that I lay down my life for her! If my desire is fulfilled, I will dance around her passionately, kiss her hands and embrace her to my content.

It is a pity that those who depart from this world never return. We can only recall them to our mind. Even today, in the still of night I offer supplications and prayers for my parents. But for my parents' passionate and fervent prayers I, my brother and my sisters would not have been blessed with the bounties. O My Lord! grant the paradise of Your pleasure and grace to my parents. Grant them Your nearness. Grant acceptance to the prayers they have offered for us. Amen.

An Excerpt from “Rooh Parwar Yaden”

Hadrat Moulvi Mohammad Siddique Sahib of Amritsar was a noted missionary of the Ahmadiyya Jamat. He served in Africa, England, Fiji Islands and Singapore. He was instrumental in establishing many branches of the Jamat in these countries. He was an extremely God-fearing, humble and a pious man. I am reproducing an excerpt from his book ‘Rooh Parwar Yaden’ for the benefit of the readers. I wrote this piece on his insistence which he included in his book.

Miraculous Effect of Prayer

In 1960, I went to Pakistan for nearly a month. During my stay, I had the good fortune of an audience with Hudur. In the course of our meeting, Hudur directed me to pay particular attention to Tabligh in Briton. He said Allah would open ways for Ahmadiyyat in this city. Hudur repeated this instruction two or three times and said that during the period of Queen Elizabeth Ist when England was under the threat of being attacked by the Spanish fleet, the Queen sought help from the Sutlan of Turkey. The Sutlan of Turkey sent some of his generals to England to take stock of the situation. Queen Elizabeth Ist stayed those Muslim generals in Briton. A room of the house in which stayed was converted into a mosque and they inscribed some Quranic on its walls.

Hudur said that in 1924 when he toured England he also visited Briton also and he saw that room and offered prayers there. Hudur further said that the as era of renaissance of Islam has started Allah would open new doors for Islam and Ahmadiyyat.

Promising Results of Tabligh in Brighton.

On my return to England, I made up my mind to set in motion Tabligh work in Briton under the instruction of Hudur Hadrat Musleh Moud r.a. There is a magnificent beautiful Royal Palace in Brighton which is set to Indian Architecture. The beautiful and intricately decorated doms and Minarets of this palace are visible even from very far distance. We rented a room of this palace and made announcements in the local papers that I (Imam Fazal Mosque London)” would deliver speeches on Islam in that hall every Saturday. We also printed 5000 copies of a

handbill which was distributed in the nearby residential area. On Saturday at the appointed time we reached Briton by car. We were a party of ten members including Mukarram Moulvi Abdul Kareem Sahib. We made arrangements for the meeting. The meeting was to be presided over by Mr. Abdul Aziz Deen Sahib. The time for the lecture was fast approaching and our anxiety intensified as not even a single person arrived in the hall fifteen minutes prior to the commencement of the meeting. When only ten minutes were left I suggested to our members present there that we should pray to God to enable us to fulfill the desire of Hudur and provide us with audience from the unseen so we all gathered in a corner of the room and began to offer prayers and supplications with tears in our eyes. When our prayers were finished, we were overwhelmed with the feelings of gratitude and thankfulness to Allah. This was because we witnessed immediate acceptance of our prayer in the shape that the hall had been packed to its capacity.

Hasty Retreat of a Christian Cleric after Throwing a Challenge

I spoke on the subject of The Truth of Islam. After the speech was over, I allowed the audience to ask any questions. Seeing the success of my speech, a Christian Cleric who was present in the hall became very upset and in order to neutralize the effect he invited me to a debate which I readily accepted. It was agreed to hold a debate on the subject of The Islam and Christianity on the following Saturday in that very hall. The following Saturday, the hall was packed with audience but the Cleric did not turn up. This created a positive impression about the truth of Islam

on the Christians present there. When the question and answer session was over, people left the hall one by one but a lady by the name Miss Irene Crème did not leave. When all the people had left, she told me that she wanted to become a Muslim. The exultation we felt at that moment could not be described in words. On being asked why she wanted to become a Muslim, she replied that she had been disinterested in Christianity since her childhood and she had form believe in the existence of God. She further related that when she became disappointed with Christianity she prayed fervently and passionately to God to guide her towards the true faith. During that period, she joined the meetings of the Bahais, Buddhist and Hindus but she could not find the light of truth anywhere. She said further,

“Lately I was becoming despondent and I was on the verge of denying the existence of God, when I read your announcement in the paper and for reasons unknown I became fully convinced that truth will surely come to me here. Last night when I prayed, it was revealed to my heart that my desire will be fulfilled in the tomorrow meeting. So when I listened to your speech today, I spontaneously decided to accept the truth.”

As she narrated this incident, her voice became choked with emotion. She said that God had brought us there for her guidance. I filled up her Biat Form, and sent to Hudur immediately. Hudur suggested her name as Miss Salaam Crème. This lady became a strong adherent of Islam and strictly followed the Islamic teachings. This can be seen in the following incident. When she came to attend the meeting the next Saturday she said to me, “I went through a mental tug of war during this week.” When I

asked her what kind of dilemma she passed through. She said,

“After filling my Bait Form you told me that Islam prohibits eating of Pork, consumption of liquor and attending functions and assemblies where men and women mix freely. When I reached home in the evening my mother placed pork before me for dinner. I was thrown in a fix whether it was totally prohibited to eat pork or we could eat occasionally. At last, I decided not to touch pork and asked about it from Imam Sahib the next week. If he says that pork is totally prohibited, then I will be saved from committing a sin and if he says that it is permissible occasionally, I will follow him.”

After that, a regular Jamat was established in Briton consisting of ten to twelve members. This was the direct result of the attention and prayers of Hadrat Khalifatul Massih IInd. Later, some of these members migrated to Turkey and the others settled in the other parts of England. However they remain in touch with the Mission House. *Alhamodillah.*

A Grand Sign of the Acceptance of Prayers of Hadrat Khalifatul Massih IV

In 1996, I was on a visit to the USA to see my family. My daughter Amtul Naseer Neno and her husband Dr. Abdul Waheed Khan asked us to accompany them to Florida to visit the Disney World and other famous sights. We accepted their invitation and reached Florida by flight. We stayed there for a week. Disney World, a great wonder of the USA is worth seeing. From there I and my wife

went to Detroit to meet my eldest daughter Amtul Jameel and her husband Ejaz Ahmad Khan. I was in perfect health and I had no illness other than the diabetes. During my stay at Detroit, I met a very able and sincere Ahmadi doctor, Qazi Waseem Ahmad. He asked me to visit his clinic the following day, and said though I was perfectly well and had no serious illness, yet I should not mind a check-up. I accepted his suggestion and reached the clinic on the appointed day. He conducted many tests including of blood and urine. At the end of the tests he told me that my heart beat was not normal, so he advised me to visit a hospital and have a full check-up of heart. He also promised to arrange the tests in the hospital. As I had obtained health insurance prior to leaving England, I did not face any problems in getting admitted in the Department of Cardiology for the heart checkup. I was made to lie down under huge cameras all the day and many images were taken. The Eco test was also conducted. The test was completed by four o'clock in the evening but I had to wait in the hospital till the consultant arrived. At last, when he arrived observing my report he told me that my heart was in a very bad condition. Diabetes had caused great harm to my heart and the arteries leading to the heart were blocked to great extent. I was surprised and said that I had never felt any pain in my heart. At this, the consultant explained that chronic diabetes patients do not often feel the pain in heart.

I asked what I should do then. He recommended an instant bypass surgery. I felt the ground under my feet slipping. I asked if it could not be treated through medicines. He replied that the condition of my heart was so bad that I could suffer a fatal heart attack at any time. So, I should have to go for an operation. I said it would be

better to conduct the operation after few days so that I may consult my children. He told me that he had conducted a thorough check-up of my heart and if I had to leave the hospital without being operated upon, I had to give this in writing that I was moving out on my own responsibility. My wife was with me. I asked her opinion. She said, "Our children will get to know about it any way. Your life is valuable. So, you should follow the doctor's advice." I accepted her suggestion.

It was Friday. The doctor told me that due to the intervening weekend the operation would be conducted on Monday. I was taken to a segregated room. My children and my brother were informed about this in Chicago. They arrived in Detroit the following day. During the weekend, many tests were conducted on me to make me ready for the operation. On Monday, I was moved to the operation theater. I was given an anesthesia so I was not aware what was going on. Later, my children told me that the operation had been completed in eleven hours. Six arteries were changed. During the operation, I had suffered a heart attack which damaged one third of my heart. Though the operation was complete, I could not come to senses at the normal speed. The doctors were doing their best, but hope of my survival was becoming bleak everyday. At last, the surgeon told my wife that as the chances of my survival were very little so she should call up relatives if she wished so. I was fighting a battle of life and death, yet I was unaware of it as I was senseless. But my wife, children and other relatives were extremely pensive and worried. When the surgeon told my wife that there was little hope of my survival, she immediately sent a fax message to Hadrat Khalifatul Massih IV and told over telephone she requested him for prayers giving him the

detail of my condition. The next day, a call was received from the office of the Private Secretary, which said, "Hudur was at his residence when he was informed of your serious condition. Hudur was moved to pity and he raised his hands to pray earnestly and fervently pray for your recovery. During the prayer itself, Hudur was transported in to a vision. Hudur saw that the door of his room was open through which I entered wearing a white dress and I was in a healthy state. I also greeted Hudur with Asslamo Alaikum. After that, the state of vision vanished and Hudur was vouchsafed this divine message that Bahir Ahmad Rafiq has been saved through your prayers."

This vision of Hudur brought great relief and solace to my wife and all the relatives. This was a grand sign of the acceptance of Hudur's prayers. After listening to the phone calls and having been consoled by Hudur, when my wife came back to the hospital she saw that I had miraculously come to senses.

I remained in the hospital for another forty one days and returned to London in full health and thus I became a glorious sign of the acceptance of prayer. *Alhamdolillah.*

*O My Philosophers! See the Power of Prayer,
It Turns the Impossible Into the Possible.*

Epilogue

A Word of Advice to My Children

I embarked on the vessel of my life on 12th September 1931. Having made stops at 79 stages the boat is now sailing towards the final destination of the worldly life and that cannot be too distant. The last stage will be in the 'Hereafter'. During the last 77 years my vessel has been through some huge and some small whirlpools and it was pounded a great deal. On occasion, the boat had to face gale force winds and storms. On two occasions, the hurricanes were so ruthless that the vessel of my life nearly went under. These two deadly spiritual ordeals turned my life upside down. Had the Divine hand not helped me I wonder what would have happened? However, by the sheer Mercy and Grace of Allah, in spite of apparent deadly trials, I emerged relatively unscathed. Alhamdulillah.

At every step of the way, I have seen the Divine hand of help over my head and I have full faith and confidence in it. In the Holy Quran the Almighty has said:

“I am near and I hear the supplications of my servants and accept them. I am close to My servants. I and hear their cries and respond.”

On very many occasions, I have witnessed this fact i.e. My Maker is nearest to me.

Some times ago, I read the autobiography of Sardar Kushwant Singh. He writes that 'many say that God is omnipresent but I have never felt that way'. I was very greatly surprised that such an extremely eminent and

famous writer, journalist, intellectual and well versed person should be ignorant of this fact. even a feeble, humble and ignorant person like me has witnessed and experienced at every step that God is always present, He is closer to us than our jugular vein, He speaks and He responds. When we are downcast, He raises our spirits. The doorway to His treasury is always wide open for those who solicit. The only condition is that one should ask.

I often wonder how one can be content after severing one's relationship with Him. His denial turns one into a coward. All kinds of superstitions surround him who denies the existence of God. He goes astray and is engulfed by darkness. He becomes a slave of the worldly means whereas those who hold His hand spend their days in complete contentment. Therefore, I advise my children never to drift away from His door. Always ask only of Him as everything belongs to Him and there is no dearth of any kind in His treasury. He will never let you down, as I have never been disillusioned. I swear by Allah that whenever I have begged of Him, He has given me plenty and He has never disappointed me. There has never been a need which, out of His Mercy and Grace, He has not fulfilled. If I begin to write in detail of His Blessings, many books will get filled. He loves us more than our parents do and His gifts far exceed those of all the kings put together. Never ever abandon His door, quite regardless of the measure of sacrifice needed.

Prostrate only before Him. A single prostration before Him will save you from bowing before so many ungodly powers. Ask of Him alone as He has what no one else has. Be His and His alone. May the dazzling affluence of the world not detract you from Him. Once He becomes yours, everything becomes yours.

The essence of my long life is that supplications lead to Him. Prayers contain enormous power. I have been deeply fond of prayers ever since my childhood. I was perhaps 12 years old and only a student of the Eighth Grade when, in the evenings, I would walk towards the River Kabul that flowed close to the village. I really enjoyed supplicating even then. In those early days, I had hardly any experience of acceptance of Prayers however I was very fond of Praying. By His Grace that habit of praying bore fruit. Throughout my life I have been engaged in and took pleasure in prayers. I have so often witnessed the manifestation of acceptance of prayers. As a result, my life has been full of joy and contentment. Prayers grant one potency equal to those of mountains. It provides serenity to the heart and strengthens it. In the midst of an ocean of grief, problems and worries it conveys you to your port of destination like a safe boat. A life without prayers is meaningless.

I advise my children to make prayers their strong citadel and derive strength and security from it. Never be neglectful of prayers. You will see that as you become engaged in prayers you will find that at every step your life has become blissful and peaceful. Normally before supplicating, I invoke Durood on the Holy Prophet PBUH. Then I pray for the Promised Messiah PBUH, his successors and his progeny. Then I pray for my parents and grandparents on both sides and then for their ancestors who are no longer with us. I pray for my mother's brothers, their spouses, my mother's sisters and their spouses and their children. I also pray for my teachers. Then I pray for my wife and my children that Allah may make them true servants of Islam and bestow upon them fondness for prayers. Then I pray for the progress of

Ahmadiyyat the true Islam. Then I pray for such dear friends as are still alive and I also pray for those who, having formed a favorable impression of me, ask me to pray for them. I pray for my brother, his wife and their children. I pray for my sisters, their spouses and their children. Over and above these, I offer many prayers with great regularity. I advise my children that, in this age, the Almighty has made the Jamaat, established by the Promised Messiah a safe haven and strong fortress to seek refuge from worldly trials and tribulations. Make sure that you remain within the four walls of this fortress. Never, even for a single moment, should your contact with the Jamaat be cut off. Always strengthen your relationship with the institution of Khilafat and make your best endeavors to develop a close relationship with the Khalifa of the time. There is nothing outside the Jamaat Ahmadiyya but trepidation. This is a great bounty from the Almighty that has been bestowed on us through the Promised Messiah. Always cherish it as a great treasure and if need be lay down your life without the slightest hesitation.

In the Holy Quran, the Almighty says

‘If you appreciate My gifts, I will continue to enlarge them and if you are ungrateful, my torment will be severe’.

Make this teaching of the Holy Quran a beacon for your life. There are hundreds of thousands of His gifts. In order to show gratitude and thankfulness for those gifts, you must, without the slightest hesitation, should surrender any of them whenever demanded. Never show niggardliness in this.

I also advise you always to strictly stick to absolute truth and never ever come within the reach of falsehood.

A MEMOIR

Falsehood is an ugly blemish on one's character; a blemish that stinks to the extent that others move away from you. Truth is a fragrance. It makes one courageous and saves one from every kind of fear. Telling a lie to gain some insignificant profit does not ever result in a real gain. In the sight of Allah a liar is an accursed one. May Allah make you a standard-bearer of the truth. May your life always be wrapped in the raiment of truth. Amen.

In the end, I beg all of you to pray for Salima Naheed and me. May Allah be pleased with us and may our end be good. May He take us away from this world when He is pleased with us and we are pleased with Him. Amen.

